

NEA Today

May 1997
Vol. 15, No. 9
Washington, D.C.

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Annual Report Enclosed
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The Newspaper for Members
of the National Education Association

Got Summer Plans?

A look at
learning
opportunities
near and far
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NEA member Phyllis Weber is
headed to Denmark this summer.

May 1997
Volume 15, Number 9

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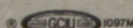
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NEA Today (ISSN 0734-7219) is published nine times a year, monthly, October, November, January, February, March, April, May, and biweekly in September by the National Education Association, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to NEA Membership Records, Attn: *NEA Today* Address Change, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

NEA Today is mailed to all NEA members as a benefit of membership. Nonmember subscription price: \$35 domestic and \$54 foreign. For members, subscriptions represent \$3.25 of annual dues.

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Saints, Scientists, and Schools

President's Viewpoint

St. Francis Xavier once said, "Give me the children until they are seven and anyone may have them afterwards."

Almost 40 years ago, British filmmaker Michael Apted found this idea so provocative, he made a series of documentaries that recorded English school children first at age 7, then at 14, 21, 28, and 35 to see if their fundamental characters had, in fact, been formed by second grade.

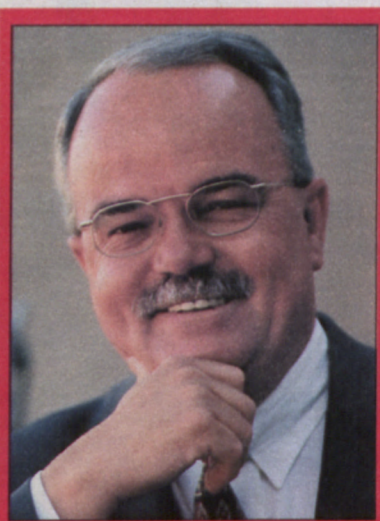
Neurobiologists have recently proven what both the saint and the filmmaker could only surmise. New scientific research reveals that children's cognitive abilities actually begin to develop in utero.

Through a miraculous process, the brain starts to form in the early weeks of gestation and develops at break-neck speed until age 3. During this period, children's neurological systems grow and expand exponentially like the roots and branches of a tree, responding to ideas, emotions, challenges, activity, and education very much the way a tree responds to sunlight, air, and water.

The quality and extent of the stimulus children receive in their first three years greatly affect how their minds develop—how they learn, behave, think, and cope emotionally. Their neurological growth continues until age 10—when, scientists have found, the brain begins to prune away those branches of cognitive activity that have been underused or uncultivated.

This means the first three years of a child's development are far more critical than anyone first imagined.

The effects of children's earliest learning experiences extend far beyond the scholastic. Scientists have



Bob Chase

Joe Di Dio

found conclusive evidence that if children are deprived of rich learning experiences during their first three years, their brain development suffers almost irreparably.

Yet if children receive quality education at a very early age, scientists have also found, it can actually help their brains offset other developmental damage that may occur from abuse, neglect, or poverty.

Tellingly, when President Clinton pledged to "ensure that all Americans have the best education in the world" during his State of the Union address earlier this year, he cited these new scientific findings and announced that the White House would hold a summit on early childhood development and the brain.

At a time when too many of America's kids are in crisis, the new brain research makes a *prima facie* case for the importance of education—especially in early childhood.

Education can make the crucial dif-

ference in the lives of the millions of American children who are abused and neglected, who live without health insurance, who live below the poverty line, who receive inadequate day care. Education, research shows, is the social safety net, the tool for redemption.

As teachers, counselors, school bus drivers, librarians, and custodians, NEA members are literally the guardians of the nation's brain trust. We are more directly involved in shaping the minds and the characters of the nation's children than anyone besides their families.

So I believe we have a moral imperative to advocate for children's education from Day One—for public preschooling that begins at age 3 and programs like Head Start, which help at-risk children make the grade.

Children, after all, do not have a union. If we do not campaign for their well-being, we are reneging on our responsibility as educators. We are complicit in abandoning them, in denying them the most important opportunity to enhance their lives.

But just as children cannot learn in a vacuum, neither can NEA members work in one. Educating children and improving schools depends upon cooperation among teachers, parents, businesses, and community leaders. NEA encourages these partnerships.

Thomas Wolfe once called America a place "where miracles not only happen, but where they happen all the time." We must work together to ensure that such miracles continue—one child at a time.

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NEA at a Glance

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Did You Know...

If you have an E-mail address, you can start receiving classroom tips from your fellow NEA members. It's all part of a new NEA service called "Works4Me." Sign up for this electronic mailing list and you'll receive, every week, an E-mail message with a tip that's helping educators help kids learn. To sign up, just send an E-mail message to: majordomo@cet.nea.org. In your message, write: subscribe Works4Me.

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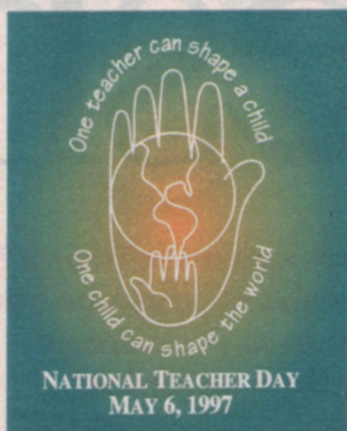
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Thank a Teacher

Chances are there was a teacher in your life who inspired you to choose education as a career. And chances are there's a student in your classroom right now who'll make the same choice. May 6 is National Teacher Day—a day set aside to honor that choice. On that day, remember that you make a difference everyday and take a minute to thank those who made that difference for you.



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A look at how a multimedia program can help deaf high school students learn more about great works of literature.

Cover Story

4 Summer Plans

Vermont teacher Carol Smith (right) uses her summer travel experiences—including a recent trip to Ghana—to teach her students about other cultures. Read about other NEA members who take advantage of summer learning opportunities near and far. Then



Craig Line

review a long list of possibilities, get out your calendar—and make plans!

Cover photo by Tom Becker

Life

35 In the Light Lane

Take your shoes off and enjoy these classroom quips. They'll help you understand how spelling got to be so much fun.

36 People

Minnesota teachers and NEA members Michael and Denise Reeser (below) are two of the lucky few who can horse around at work and at home.



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Should morals be taught in the classroom? NEA members in Pennsylvania and Nevada take sides on this value-laden topic.

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Time to get out your summer reading list—and put three books beautifully written by teachers at the top.

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An Arkansas teacher finds a way to sensitize students to the plight of recent immigrants from Mexico. Plus, heaps of your letters on hot topics.

Refresh

**Want to make the most of your summer break?
Take some inspiration from NEA members showcased here,
then turn the page for leads and resources
that may set your imagination spinning!**

Phyllis Weber teaches all year at the gateway to one of America's most popular summer destinations, Yosemite National Park.

But this summer you won't find Weber anywhere near Yosemite. She's headed for Denmark—and a once-in-a-lifetime experience swapping jobs with a Danish teacher.

Weber is just one of countless NEA members who'll be using this summer to stretch her educational horizons.

You don't, of course, have to travel vast distances to make the most of a summer break.

Karen Hutchinson will be spending the summer right at home in California. She'll be working with a colleague to develop training materials that can help students work with their peers to defuse racial tensions.

Peer-to-peer programs have worked well at Hutchinson's Truckee High, and she's eager to try to share that success.

"We want other schools," she says, "to reap the benefits of creating an environment of respect for diversity."

Alex Zemansky, an eighth grade English teacher from Naperville, Illinois, will be home, too—heading up, for the 14th straight year, a program for 14- and 15-year-olds having trouble in school. The program offers remediation, counseling, and a chance to earn credits toward graduation.

Not too far away in Mentor, Ohio, elementary media specialist Kevin Schaner will be evaluating Internet sites appropriate for the coming year's curriculum.

"Surfing the Net," says Schaner, "should be a part of every educator's summer vacation!"

Grandin Smith would rather be outdoors. A teacher at Manton High School in Michigan, Smith will be photographing wild flowers this summer for an outdoor education



Phyllis Weber is leaving the beauty of her home near Yosemite National Park this summer to teach in Denmark. She's eager to learn more about the Danish practice of keeping students and teachers together, in intact class groups, from first to tenth grade.

class reference book he and his wife are creating.

Smith will also be developing the curriculum and itinerary for a four-day environmental science trip that he'll be taking 10 students on in September.

"So much wilderness to enjoy," says Smith, "and so little time to enjoy it!"

Bob Summer—yes, that's his real name—would certainly agree. Summer, a 38-year-old eighth grade teacher from Alaska, has organized a team of cancer survivors to climb the 20,320-foot Mount McKinley.

"With every step of the way," says Summer, a cancer survivor himself, "we'll be raising money to help send kids with cancer to summer camps."

You can find out more about Summer's effort by E-mailing positive@alaska.net.

Mary Alice Harrington, a second grade teacher in Hingham, Massachusetts, won't be scaling any mountains this summer. But she'll be meeting lots of new people and putting her educator skills to rewarding use—as an Information Booth volunteer at Harvard Square in Cambridge.

Smiles Harrington: "I've found lodging in youth hostels for travelers on very meager budgets, accompanied a young European woman to the emergency room for dental care, and laughed with a street person asking how to get to Kansas—as he lifted up a Wizard of Oz shopping bag he found on the street."

Ambitious. Modest. Daring. Fun. No single description—except maybe one—could ever fit the variety of activities these NEA members will be pursuing this summer.

What is that common denominator? Enlightening. These NEA members will all learn from their unique experiences—and rejoin their students next school year ready to share more than they've ever been able to share before.

Tom Becker

Learning Opportunities Near and Far

Getting Totally Immersed In German—in Virginia



For four weeks each summer, seven German teachers from Virginia go to camp—language immersion camp, that is—along with 60 of the state's most accomplished

high school students.

Once on the campus of Sweet Briar College, adults and teenagers alike toss out English and steep themselves in German.

"We eat, sleep, and breathe German," says NEA member Larry Becker, who's taught at the German Academy for the past nine years and directed the operation for the last two.

The German Academy takes students well beyond grammar and mechanics.

"It's a chance for students to learn about German culture," explains Becker. "We teach literature, cooking, folk dancing, and music."

Students even get a chance to learn Russian—which, in keeping with the Academy's immersion method, is taught in German.

A typical day at the German Academy begins at 7:30 a.m., with breakfast for students and staff, and ends some 15 hours later with an entertainment program that may include student presentations, films, a dance, or other recreational activity.

In between, students attend classes, work on a newspaper and a yearbook, do handicrafts, and participate in drama and choral clubs.

"It's absolutely exhausting," Becker confesses. "I might get four or five hours of sleep each night."

Despite the pace, Becker looks to the Academy for rejuvenation and



Vermont middle school teacher Carol Smith spends her summers traveling—and uses her experiences to develop new curriculum for her students.

credits it for giving him an opportunity to "teach things I wouldn't normally get to teach, like poetry, mythology, and children's literature."

In fact, he often puts Academy lesson plans to work in his classes back home in the Virginia Beach city schools.

"The summer German Academy affects my teaching in hundreds of ways," adds Becker. "It's four weeks of non-stop activity. But by the time it ends, I can't wait to get back to my classroom with all I've learned."

Trekking to Ghana for Lessons in Vermont

It's a long trek from the crisp mountains of Vermont to the sultry rainforests of West Africa. But then, as Vermont NEA member Carol Smith will tell you, that's what summers are for.

The summer before last, Smith spent five weeks in Ghana, much of that with three families. She observed funerals and other ceremonies, spent time at a dancing and drumming school, learned to cook African dishes, and visited schools.

"Then I used my trip to teach my students about another culture," explains Smith, a grade 6-8 teacher at the Shelburne Community School.

Smith has made her time in Ghana the foundation for a cultural study unit for her students. Hundreds of photos and hours of videotape, along with artwork she brought back, have helped bring Ghana to life.

"My students need to grow and learn about other parts of the world," says Smith. "I had to get the experience of other cultures firsthand before I could try to teach that experience to my kids."

Smith's trip has led to a sister-school exchange program with a school in Oda, Ghana. Smith's students have raised money and sent books to the school. Penpal letters arrive regularly, as Ghanaian students share their lives with the Vermont students.

"My kids learned about another part of the world," says Smith. "They've learned that, in many ways, we are more the same than different."

Coming up on Smith's itinerary: a visit to Southern Africa.

Driving the 'Road Ahead' Through Seattle



In Oregon's Bethel School District, teachers with a question about technology always turn to NEA member Tim Goss.

His colleagues, laughs Goss, "probably think of me as a propeller head."

This summer, that "propeller head" reputation figures to take off. Goss will be serving as one of 22 mentors to teams of educators brought to Seattle by NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education.

The teams will be convening for the final summer seminar of NFIE's Road Ahead program, an initiative funded by Microsoft CEO Bill Gates.

This eight-day seminar will cover topics like using the Internet and authoring a Web site. Goss, the district's technology coordinator, will be emphasizing that technology is a tool, not a destination.

"The real question," he says, "is what do students need to know and be able to do when you're finished?"

Technology, Goss is always quick to admit, is not the only tool that educators need.

"Sometimes 3x5 flash cards will do the trick," he says. "But in a lot of cases, technology can enhance student outcomes, and that's the focus we want teachers to be able to have."

The Road Ahead program is one of the many professional development initiatives NFIE sponsors. For more information on these programs, contact NFIE at 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, or E-mail jhodgson@nea.org.

Have a summer idea or resource that you'd like to share with your NEA colleagues?

Just E-mail your information to neapub15@aol.com.

Expand Professional Horizons

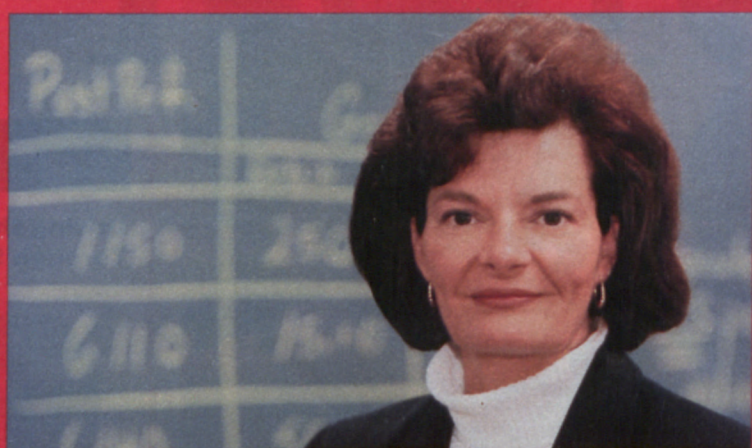
If knowledge is power, how about spending the summer getting souped up? Here are some options.

The **National Women's History Project** will conduct an intensive training on multicultural approaches to incorporating women's history into all areas of the K-12 curriculum. The program runs August 3-7 in Rohnert Park, California. Registration closes July 11. The \$395 fee includes a 300-page notebook

of copymasters and resource materials. For information, call 707/838-6000 or E-mail nwhp@aol.com.

How do the schools in Italy or New Zealand implement **inclusion**? Get graduate degree credit for a four- to five-week Syracuse University course in one of these countries. Cost ranges from \$4,600 to \$5,000 (includes tuition and housing but not airfare). Contact Daisy Fried at 315/443-9419 or E-mail dsfried@summon3.syr.edu.

Learn how to use **historical documents** in the classroom at a workshop



NEA member Glenda Teach, a business education teacher in Piqua, Ohio, spends a few days each summer honing her skills as an advocate for public education. Like thousands of other NEA members across the country, she attends a Summer Leadership Academy sponsored by her NEA state affiliate.

called "Primarily Teaching," presented by the National Archives and Records Administration from June 24 to July 3 in Washington, D.C. The program, which costs \$100, is designed for teachers from upper elementary through college level. Graduate credit is available for an extra fee. Call 202/501-6729 or check the Web at www.nara.gov/nara/digital/priteach.html.

To help teachers bring the **rain forests** alive for students, the National Science Teachers Association is

co-sponsoring a series of week-long workshops to the Amazon, Belize, and Costa Rica in July. The all-inclusive cost (from Miami) runs about \$2,000. Contact Frances A. Gatz at 800/669-6806.

The **Bronx (New York) Zoo** offers week-long workshops in June, July, and August for K-12 teachers, centering on the four multidisciplinary curriculums the zoo has developed for teaching science, math, language, art, and social studies. The \$240 fee covers lodging and two meals per day. Some transportation costs are reimbursed. Call Ann Robinson at 800/937-5131.

Spend three weeks in a **New Zealand** school, paired with an expert reading teacher, to learn that country's unified literacy-based approach to reading. Graduate credits available through Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. For fees and dates, contact INTERead New Zealand, P.O. Box 12118, Wellington, New Zealand. Fax 011-64-4-4758788.

Teachers can earn a free **overseas trip** by organizing and chaperoning at least six students through the American Council for International Studies. If more than six enroll, the teacher receives a stipend. For more information, check the Web at www.convergent.com/acis/index.html or E-mail edu_travel@acis.com.

Alaskan history, culture, marine life, and more are the focus of week-long educational adventure seminars sponsored by North Spirit Educational Institute. Seminars include travel to remote villages and schools—with an emphasis on developing student-centered classrooms. Cost (not including airfare) is \$2,225. Call 888/338-8992 or E-mail james-e-oconnor@uiowa.edu.

langstudy@aol.com for more information on the Language Liaison program.) The Peterson's Web site (www.petersons.com) provides additional information on learning adventures.

If you're **traveling with children** this summer, pick up a copy of *Great Nature Vacations with Your Kids* by Dorothy Jordon (World Leisure, \$9.95) for adventures for every age and price range. It includes intriguing options like Tread Lightly Ltd., which organizes tours exploring the ecology of Mexico, Mongolia, and places in between. Call 800/643-0060.

The **Sierra Club** sponsors family outings everywhere from the Grand Canyon to Acadia National Park. Call 415/977-5630.

Build a Better World

Spend a week of your vacation building a house for a family in need (no skills necessary!). Call **Habitat for Humanity** at 800/422-4828 to find out where your help is needed. Work camps provide simple lodging for out-of-town volunteers, but they do charge a fee to defray costs. Minimum age for volunteers is 16. Volunteer slots for some projects fill up quickly, so it's best to call at least a couple months in advance.

Call **Passport in Time**, a program of the U.S. Forest Service, at 800/281-9176 to find out how you can work on projects ranging from excavating prehistoric sites to compiling oral histories at locations all over the United States. Time commitment varies, but the minimum is three to five days.

Use your teaching skills all over the globe as a volunteer for the **Catholic Network of Volunteer Service**. Call 800/543-5046 or E-mail cnvs@ari.net.

Teach or build health clinics in Belize, Guatemala, Kenya, or Mexico through the **Global Citizens Network**. Costs range from \$400 to \$1,300, with accommodations in homes or community buildings. Plans must be made at least two months in advance. Call 800/644-9292 or E-mail gcn@mtn.org.

Contact **Earthwatch** to participate in projects worldwide. This summer's offerings include the chance to study the social behavior of barracuda while scuba diving and snorkeling among the reefs off Papua New Guinea. Earthwatch expeditions average two weeks, costing from \$600 to \$2,200 (excluding airfare), and are tax deductible. Call 800/776-0188 or check the Web at www.earthwatch.org.

Join the **Fresh Air Fund**, which runs a camp for needy New York City teens in Fishkill, New York. The Fund hires paid program staff with special skills ranging from photography to boating. For information call 800/367-0003 or E-mail info@freshair.org.

Sign up for **Project Archeology**, which offers two- and three-day workshops in 15 states for teachers in grades 4 to 7. Participants work in the classroom and on-site, gaining ideas for teaching archeology in their schools—with a strong emphasis on archeological ethics. Call 800/722-3988.

Travel to New Destinations

For a \$30 annual membership fee, you can travel the globe with the **Educators Bed and Breakfast Network** and find lodging for just \$27 a night for two. Teachers' homes in 40 countries are open to members, who also agree to host traveling educators when convenient. Call 800/377-0301 or e-mail EduBaBNet@aol.com.

A must-read for educators is the brand-new **Peterson's Learning Adventures Around the World** (\$24.95) by Peter S. Greenberg, the travel editor of NBC's "Today" show. The book highlights opportunities like Language Liaison, a program that lets you study Spanish while living with a local teacher. (Call Nancy Forman at 305/682-9909 or E-mail

At the National Level

Congress Gets a Positive Focus

NEA's Quality Public Schools Agenda makes its mark in Congress.

"Access to telecommunications grounds students in what are becoming basic workplace skills, such as using E-mail, having proficiency in use of the Internet for research, and performing file and data transfers."

This NEA testimony on the need to implement discounted school access to the Information Superhighway—mandated by the Telecommunications Act of 1996—is just a sample of the no-nonsense comments on education that Congress is hearing these days.

It's all part of NEA's pursuit of our Quality Public Schools Agenda, a set of federal legislative initiatives designed to strengthen public schools.

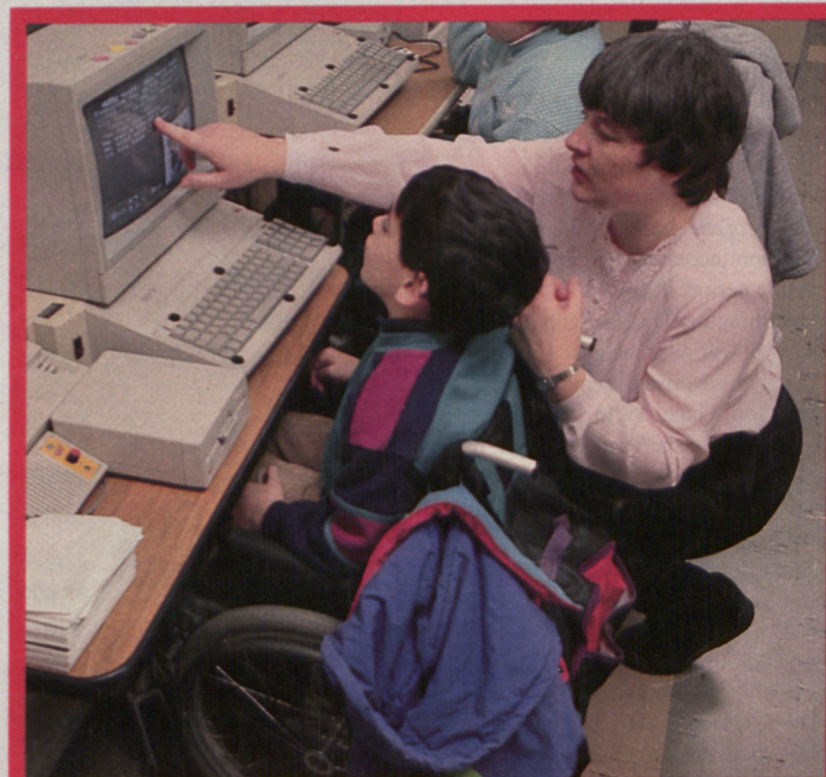
"We're working on 18 specific recommendations at once," notes NEA senior lobbyist Dale Lestina, "so we're still striving to get lawmakers to focus on our Agenda as a whole—while putting education and children back in the limelight again."

With all the talk about campaign finance reform and investigatory hearings, "this is something positive for members of Congress to work on," Lestina adds.

"In every meeting we have with congressional staffers," he observes, "it's clear that education is high on lawmakers' radar screens. We want to focus this concern on what needs to be done to help kids and schools."

And there's no better vehicle than NEA's five-point Quality Agenda, which is already making its mark in these target areas:

■ **Safety and order in every school.** In testimony on Senate reauthorization—extension and improvement—of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), NEA President Bob Chase called for language on disciplinary procedures that "address the removal of seriously disruptive students from the classroom." Moreover, House bill H.R. 879—the Teaching Responsibility and Accountability to Children Act—has been introduced to provide screening and service referral for youth facing criminal proceedings



Appropriate professional development for teachers who work with students with disabilities—that's just part of what NEA's Quality Public Schools Agenda calls for.

■ **A qualified teacher in every classroom.** In his comments on IDEA, Chase also called for provisions specifying that paraprofessionals must be trained by "qualified personnel"—plus strong professional development guarantees for any teachers working with students with disabilities.

■ **Every school building in good condition.** President Clinton is backing a measure that would provide poor school districts with bond subsidies for the renovation and reconstruction of school buildings. NEA sees this \$5 billion program as a good first step to addressing the nation's \$112 billion school renovation needs, but is seeking to perfect the legislation to benefit more students.

■ **Every student's classroom connected to new technologies.** NEA supports the recently introduced Teacher Technology Training Act (S. 351), which amends various federal teacher preparation and professional development programs to include training in effective use of education technology.

And the Education and Library Networks Coalition (EdLiNC)—with

which NEA is affiliated—has urged Congress to adopt recommendations of the Federal Communications Commission's Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service.

That panel has called for implementation of the Telecommunications Act by making up to \$2.25 billion available annually in school/library discounts—for such services as Internet access and internal telecom connections.

■ **Every child ready to learn.** NEA is evaluating several bipartisan proposals to expand health care coverage for children. According to U.S. Census statistics, 9.8 million children—or one out of seven—had no health insurance in 1995.

To learn more about the Quality Public Schools Agenda and how you can help move it through Congress, watch for NEA's Quality Agenda Web page—you'll be able to link with it through the NEA home page (www.nea.org)—and sign up for a weekly E-mail action alert. To receive the alert, just address an E-mail to majordomo@cet.nea.org with a one-line message: *subscribe Quality Agenda.*

Heroes & Zeroes



Scoff if you will at the squeaky-clean image of TV host-turned-musician



John Tesh, but the guy puts his money where his morals are. Now on a 60-city tour, Tesh donates \$1 from each concert ticket he sells to elementary school music programs.



A thousand pairs of torn hose to the three Pomona, California public schools that fought to maintain a dress code prohibiting women from wearing pants. More than six months after NEA member Roxanne Pittman filed a lawsuit, district officials agreed to drop the dress code for teachers, update the dress code for female students, and pay Pittman \$10,000 plus attorneys' fees.



An Advocacy Oscar to actor Alec Baldwin, who's a big supporter of that other NEA—the National Endowment for the Arts. Baldwin spent a day in D.C. lobbying for continued federal funding for the arts. Some say he may have even swayed the Newt-ster.



Help! Rescue the kids who face Operation Rescue's pestering picket lines. The anti-abortionists are assembling just outside 150 high schools around the country carrying huge, graphic photos of dismembered fetuses and calling it "an education campaign." Just 'cause they have the right doesn't make it right.



If all business leaders cared about kids just a tenth as much as



Minnesota McDonald's owner Louis Henry, Jr. does, what a world it would be! Henry is an activist extraordinaire—

doing everything from targeting at-risk kids for jobs to paying for parent-involvement brochures to serving on dozens of community boards. Our kids need a few more like him.

In the States

Show-Me the Money State

They only rank 28th in pay nationally, but Missouri educators enjoyed the highest average raise last year—6.8 percent. That's because Governor Mel Carnahan and the legislature pushed through laws in 1993 that are generating more than \$400 million in new revenue a year for public education. Some sources: Higher taxes on corporations and high-end incomes, revenue from riverboat gambling, and every penny from the state lottery.

Running Dry in Wyoming

A severe downturn in Wyoming's oil industry—the state's key revenue generator—has helped deplete teacher purchasing power by 18.5 percent over the past 10 years. The Wyoming Education Association has long argued for a stable source of education funding. Lawmakers need to start listening—the state Supreme Court has mandated “equal educational opportunity” for all students by July 1.

A Little Off the Top

Thanks largely to Governor Zell Miller, Georgia educators have enjoyed annual state raises of 5 percent or 6 percent since 1994-95. But now many school boards are refusing to hike their local salary “supplements” by the same percentages. When its board started the chiseling, the Dougherty County Association of Educators notified reporters that the \$250,000 in savings was going to pay for three new administrators. The result: one fewer assistant superintendent than planned.

Why They're Number One

Connecticut educators are the highest paid in the country. Eight out of ten of these teachers have an MA or higher, and Connecticut's teacher induction and in-service training requirements are among the highest in the nation.

Salaries Stay Stuck in Neutral

‘How are we going to attract qualified people without attractive salaries?’ asks NEA’s Chase.

The national average teacher salary increased 3 percent over the past year, to \$37,685, according to NEA's recently released *Rankings of the States*, 1996.

Inflation increased 2.7 percent during the same period. Teachers in 16 states and Washington, D.C. actually lost purchasing power over the past 10 years.

That's no surprise to senior English teacher Tom Flanagan. In 1979, he was a local Teacher of the Year. This year, he's one of 38 educators at Medford Vocational Technical High School moonlighting to make ends meet.

That economic reality, plus the added workload he's facing under the state's education reform law, prompted this “tired” NEA member to write an op-ed article in the *Boston Globe*.

The first step to reform, Flanagan wrote, “is to pay teachers a respectable salary that's commensurate with the burden put on them in the classroom.”

“Teaching is an emotionally, physically, and intellectually challenging career,” NEA President Bob Chase told the press as he released the *Rankings*.

“The nation needs 2 million new teachers over the next 10 years. How are we going to attract qualified people without attractive salaries?”

Every NEA state affiliate is grappling with this issue. A sampling of the bad and the good:

■ A slow economy in Maine, Rhode Island, Hawaii, and Wyoming is pounding teacher paychecks. In Maine, education's share of the state budget has dropped from 56 percent to 44 percent, forcing heavy reliance on property taxes—an invitation to taxpayer revolt.

■ The Nebraska legislature has limit-

Average Salaries of Public School Teachers, 1995-96

1. Connecticut	\$50,254	27. Georgia	34,087
2. Alaska	49,620	28. Missouri	33,341
3. New York	48,115	29. Florida	33,330
4. New Jersey	47,910	30. Tennessee	33,126
5. Pennsylvania	46,087	31. Kentucky	33,080
6. Michigan	44,796	32. Maine	32,869
7. District of Columbia	43,700	33. Arizona	32,484
8. California	43,114	34. Iowa	32,372
9. Massachusetts	42,882	35. West Virginia	32,155
10. Rhode Island	42,160	36. Texas	32,000
11. Maryland	41,215	37. South Carolina	31,622
12. Illinois	40,919	38. Wyoming	31,571
13. Delaware	40,533	39. Nebraska	31,496
14. Oregon	39,575	40. Alabama	31,313
15. Wisconsin	38,182	41. Idaho	30,891
16. Washington	38,025	42. Utah	30,588
17. Ohio	37,835	43. North Carolina	30,411
18. Indiana	37,677	44. New Mexico	29,632
19. Minnesota	36,937	45. Montana	29,364
20. Vermont	36,295	46. Arkansas	29,322
21. Nevada	36,167	47. Oklahoma	28,404
22. Hawaii	35,807	48. Mississippi	27,692
23. New Hampshire	35,792	49. North Dakota	26,969
24. Colorado	35,364	50. Louisiana	26,800
25. Kansas	35,134	51. South Dakota	26,346
26. Virginia	35,037	U.S. Average	\$37,685

Source: *Rankings of the States*, 1996, NEA Research

ed budget increases for schools to 2 percent in 1997 and 0 percent in 1998—and passed a property tax cap resulting in a \$200 million cut in school aid in 1998-99.

■ The Wisconsin governor and legislature have saddled teachers with a de facto salary cap that provides an annual pay increase of 1.54 percent. As a result, teachers are losing at least 1.5 percent annually to inflation.

■ Some growing states like Arizona, Florida, and Idaho are keeping salaries low even though they can afford to pay

teachers well. “School boards have watched the state be stingy with its money and decided they need to hoard what they get,” reports Gayle Moore of the Idaho Education Association.

■ Some low-ranked states like Georgia, Missouri, Mississippi, and North Carolina are working to make educators' pay competitive. North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt is sponsoring legislation that boosts the minimum salary by \$3,670 over four years and rewards educators who do extra work like mentoring new teachers.

The Bottom Line

Protecting kids: In 1995, the latest year with full statistics, teachers and other citizens reported 3,102,000 cases of possible child abuse to state and local child protection agencies. These agencies were able to substantiate abuse in nearly 1 million of these cases. For the year, 1,215 children died of abuse and neglect.

Missing parents: A half million children currently live in foster homes because their parents are either unable or unwilling to care for them. Nearly 40 percent of these children have physical health problems. One factor behind the problems: prenatal drug exposure. About 15 percent of pregnancies now involve fetal alcohol or drug exposure.

Home alone: About 35 million mothers of children under 13 work outside the home, but only 14 million kids are enrolled in child care centers or licensed family day care homes. Where are the rest of the kids? Only 19 percent of working mothers report they have relatives available to help with child care responsibilities.

Welfare fine print: The welfare reform act enacted last August limits eligibility for food stamps. One result: less food stamp help for families who pay more than 50 percent of their income for shelter. The act also ends the federal aid that helps child care centers offer extra meals for kids who are on site more than eight hours per day.

At the Local Level

Strong-Arm Tactics Meet Their Match

Facing steel fences and strikebreakers, Oregon teachers dig in and gain a new contract.

When 190 NEA members in Sandy, Oregon sought a contract last winter, administrators set the tone by changing the locks at the schools in this "Gateway to Mount Hood."

Unlike the scores of school contract disputes that are settled peacefully each year, bargaining between two NEA locals and Sandy's elementary and secondary school boards ended up in a bitter seven-day strike.

The boards refused to budge on a first-year teacher salary increase and wage reopeners in the following two years. They cited two state ballot measures that limit property tax increases.

But that fiscal restraint didn't stop the boards from shelling out \$650,000 to break the union.

On February 5, Sandy teachers were ordered to check out of their buildings at noon—to make way for extra administrators, 49 private security guards, and personnel to put up cyclone fences and install new locks.

"Our schools looked like prisons," shudders Linda Whitmore, president of the Sandy Elementary Teachers Association.

On February 7, the penal effect was completed with criminals of a sort—strikebreaking teachers earning \$200 a day, along with meals and lodging.



Their school boards spent \$650,000 to break their strike, but that didn't stop NEA picketers in Sandy, Oregon. They sought and won community support for a fair contract settlement—and returned to work with heads held high.

Those "replacements" soon received a 37 percent raise, to \$275 a day—quite a bit more than the first-year increase of 3.5 percent that the Association sought in mediation and the school boards rejected.

During this tough strike, only one teacher crossed the picket line. And the other 189 did much more than march around with picket signs.

Three times a week, Association members conducted a "community canvass" in this small town to talk to neighbors about their issues.

Those contacts paid off after the state labeled the strike "illegal"—due to a technicality in the strike notice—and NEA members went back to work.

When 750 Association members from across Oregon rallied in support of Sandy teachers on February 22, local residents gathered to demand that the school boards submit the dispute to binding arbitration.

Sentiment to end the standoff snowballed. A 300-member citizens' group pressured both sides to accept a compromise settlement package.

After the Association accepted the package and the school boards rejected

it, the citizens' group stormed a board meeting. Shortly thereafter, the boards sent an improved offer to the mediator.

That was the basis of a new three-year contract that includes a 2.5 percent increase in the first year, cost-of-living increases in the second and third, language barring arbitrary transfers, and guarantees of equipment and materials for successful inclusion of special needs students.

A week after the Sandy settlement, NEA President Bob Chase told striking Roberts Education Association members in Pennsylvania that NEA is "determined to forge a new, collaborative relationship between union and management. Our schools need it. The children we teach deserve it."

"But our call for cooperation must not be taken as a sign of weakness," he added. "We will never roll over and play dead in the face of strong-arm blackmail tactics by management. We will never go back to the days when teachers were treated with contempt by school boards."

(Reporting by Oregon Education Association staffer Shari Forbes and NEA Today intern Muthoni Wambu.)

Speaking with One Voice

In Milwaukee, 2,500 educational assistants have voted to affiliate with the Wisconsin Education Association Council and NEA. "Our unification means we will speak with one voice on issues of importance to school employees and children," says WEAC President Terry Craney.

Stand and Deliver

In the past three years, the Cobb County (Georgia) Association of Educators has doubled its membership—and quadrupled its political clout. The action started in 1995, when CCAE members mobilized to get the school board to fork over a state-mandated 6 percent raise.

The local then worked with community groups to deliver this large county's vote on an initiative to amend the state constitution. The outcome: Counties may now call referenda on a local sales tax to aid public education.

CCAE has also gotten an Association member elected to the school board—and established a good working relationship with the superintendent.

Pulling in Those Parents

The Atlantic City (New Jersey) Education Association has involved some 40 percent of local members in union activities. Its next goal: involving taxpayers in their schools.

Working with community groups last year, ACEA sponsored three elementary schools in educational "Kids' Fairs." Earlier this year, the local teamed up with the Parents' Advisory Council to hold the first in a series of awards breakfasts for honor roll students and those with perfect attendance records.

ACEA also includes parents in its district-wide safety program. Parent volunteers have been trained on operating walkie-talkies and participate in a school site observation system.

Strong words: In one out of 10 American junior and senior highs, profanity is not a problem—according to a recent poll of secondary school principals. About a third of secondary principals say profanity-laden insults toward teachers are a daily concern. Another 31 percent face profanity incidents weekly.

Top-down decisions: The trend to site-based decision-making seems to be off the nation's fast-track. In 1988, 14 percent of teachers reported participating in most of their school's "important educational decisions." In 1994, according to a new U.S. Education Department study, the percentage was up just 1 point.

Where's the beef?: The U.S. Agriculture Department has decided to let schools substitute yogurt for meat in school lunches. Under the rule, four ounces for yogurt can substitute for one ounce of meat. The National Cattleman's Beef Association argued against expanding the official USDA meat substitute list.

Nutrition nukes: Ready for more glitzy stores hawking candy to children? FAO Schwarz, the mega-retailer for kids, is opening a new chain of "FAO Schweetz" candy stores. The company is billing each store as a "memorable experience for kids," complete with nine-foot chocolate soldiers.

Around the World

Repression in Nigeria

The military government of Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria, is facing growing international condemnation over human rights abuses—everything from suspension of constitutional rights to the execution of opposition leaders.

High on the regime's "enemies" list: Nigeria's trade union movement.

The government of General Sani Abacha has put two key oil sector unions under direct federal control and outlawed three higher education unions. One of those organizations, the Academic Staff Union of Universities, was totally dissolved following a strike over pay last year.

The Nigerian regime—which annulled a democratic election in 1993—can attribute its staying power to oil production, which generates some 80 percent of federal revenue.

Nigeria's top driller is Shell Oil, which has extracted some \$30 billion from the Ogoniland region alone since 1958.

According to the environmental organization Greenpeace, Shell's intensive drilling has led to widespread devastation in that region's Niger delta. Frequent oil spills have contaminated water supplies, fisheries, and farmland, while flaring of natural gas dissolved in crude oil has polluted the air.

When the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People demanded compensation for this environmental degradation in 1995, a military tribunal tried the group's leaders on bogus charges. Then soldiers quickly executed movement President Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his fellow activists.

These outrages, coupled with Shell Oil's close relationship with the Nigerian government, have prompted human rights groups worldwide to push for a Shell boycott.

A Mexican Teacher 'Disappears'



Jeremy Bigwood

Seven months ago, the teacher husband of Norma Lorena Santos was "disappeared" off the streets of Chilpancingo, after trying to organize the families of his poor students.

"Teachers in poor communities are often the only people with any real education," says Pastor Silva Cruz, a leader in Local 22 of Mexico's teachers union. "We become leaders, and, because we make demands for our communities, we're targets."

To help locate Alvarado, NEA President Bob Chase has sent President Ernesto Zedillo of

Mexico a letter asking his intervention.

Unfortunately, notes Mickey Ibarra, the manager of NEA International Relations, the need for letters like this is not an isolated event.

Earlier this year, for instance, Chase sent out a protest to Djibouti. Police there had seized and beaten demonstrating teachers, then released some days later in the desert, miles from water. Other Djibouti teachers, Ibarra adds, are still detained.

Outrages like these are regularly monitored—and protested—by the Education International, the NEA-backed organization that links educators in nearly 150 countries.

These protests, notes Ibarra, help advance NEA's commitment to quality education for *all* children. That's because, he explains, educators are often the best advocates children have.

Says Ibarra: "We have a responsibility to make our voices heard when governments try to silence the voices of other educators."

Want to help defend educators worldwide?

For more information, check the Education International Web site at unesco.uneb.edu/ei/english/menu.htm.

Another Web resource, on Mexico, is Global Exchange, which maintains a site at www.globalexchange.org. This organization is planning a teacher tour to Mexico for August 10-20. For information, call 800/497-1994.

In poor villages the world over, activist teachers help kids—and anger the powers-that-be.

Imagine you worked in a school where few students came from homes with clean running water. In this poor community, imagine yourself one of the only adults literate enough to write out letters of complaint to local municipal officials.

What would you do? Help poor families fight for clean water? Or retreat to your classroom and look out onto seats filled by sickly children?

In Mexico—and many other countries around the world—this stark choice faces teachers all the time.

Gregorio Alvarado López, a 36-year-old primary teacher, made his choice right at the start of his career. He chose to combine teaching with organizing

the poor families of his students.

Now Alvarado is neither teaching nor organizing. Last September 26, he was "disappeared"—kidnapped—from his car and hasn't been seen since.

In March, Alvarado's wife, Norma Lorena Santos, took her husband's story to Washington, D.C. Accompanied by a teacher union colleague of her husband, she met with NEA International Relations and Human and Civil Rights staffers.

Her husband's disappearance, Lorena explained, was no surprise.

"Our family had lived for a year under constant harassment and surveillance," she noted.

Lorena has given local police the license plate numbers of the cars that had been tailing her husband. But the authorities, she charges, have done nothing with that lead.

Top-ranking officials, Lorena believes, are behind her husband's disappearance, as part of a campaign to intimidate their political opponents.

The Bottom Line

Missing public services: In Mexico today, only 57 percent of rural families have access to clean water, according to the latest UNICEF statistics. About a third of rural Mexican families—32 percent—have adequate sanitation. Currently, 16 percent of Mexican children who start primary school drop out by fifth grade.

No school, no learning: Nearly one out of four elementary school-age children in the developing world is not attending school. In the industrial nations, only 1 percent of children under 14 are not in classes. The two regions where young children are least likely to be learning: South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Child labor: Some 200 million children ages 10-14 in the developing world are now working. Three out of every four of these children, reports the U.N., work six days a week or more. An even more alarming one-half work nine hours a day or more. About nine of 10 of the globe's children—87 percent—live in the developing world.

Peace time?: The Cold War is over and U.S. military spending is down—but not nearly as much as military spending in the rest of the world. American military expenditures dropped 21 percent between 1986 and 1994, but the U.S. share of worldwide military spending actually increased, from 28 to 34 percent, during the same period.

On Your Side

Members Work To Clear the Air

Indoor air pollution at school is enough to make you sick. NEA activists find solutions that are a breath of fresh air.

Suffer from sinus congestion? Dizziness? The cause may be all around you, for the indoor air at public schools can be two to five times more polluted than what's outside.

That's why NEA's Health Information Network has joined in the creation of a new Indoor Air Quality Program for NEA members.

Formed in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, this program provides information on how to improve air quality in schools through an *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Action Kit*.

To date, the air quality program has trained more than 50 Association activists on identifying factors that cause indoor air quality problems.

Among the culprits: poor fresh air ventilation; synthetic building materials and furnishings; chemically formulated personal care products, pesticides, and housekeeping supplies; and airborne biological contaminants.

The tightly sealed construction of many new schools only adds to the problem by allowing indoor air pollutants to build up.

Third grade teacher Patricia Keene had already formed an Indoor Air Quality Committee in her Spokane (Washington) district when she attended the first NEA training session last June.

Employees who work in buildings with poorly maintained heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, Keene points out, are more susceptible to illness. Symptoms can include fatigue, headaches, shortness of breath, sinus congestion, and dry or itchy skin.

As part of the NEA training,



To tackle indoor air pollution, NEA activist Patricia Keene recommends using this Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Action Kit, which offers low-cost solutions.

Association members tour a local school and learn how to identify the sources of indoor air quality problems.

"I was able to go back to my school and point out things wrong with our building," reports Randy Boyd, a Hico, West Virginia high school teacher.

Boyd spotted problems that cost significant dollars to fix. But clean air doesn't always come with a steep price tag.

In fact, the training program showcases ways to resolve indoor air quality problems cheaply and effectively.

"Sometimes school districts contract with expensive companies to test their air," says NEA staffer Michele Hodak, who coordinates this joint program. "But the *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Action Kit* can offer no-cost or low-cost ways to improve air quality by using school staff."

■ For more information on the NEA Health Information Network's Indoor Air Quality Training Program, call 800/718-8387. And to obtain the EPA's *Indoor Air Quality Basics for Schools* fact sheet, call 800/438-4318.

■ The *General Accounting Office Report* on schools (GAO/HEHS-96-148) provides a state-by-state listing of the number of schools with indoor air quality problems—background information that may be useful when approaching administrators. For a free copy, call 202/512-6000.

■ The *Healthy School Handbook* discusses "sick building syndrome," how it affects teaching and learning, and what educators can do. \$21.95 (for NEA members) plus s&h from the NEA Professional Library. #1863-X-10-F. Call 800/229-4200 to order.

—Reginald Simmons

Play by the Rules

With legal support from the Education Association of Alexandria (Virginia), retired high school teacher Hugh Hollar has won some \$15,000 in accumulated sick leave. On his last day of work, this 34-year veteran received a school board letter announcing that the retirement policy had been "changed." The Virginia Supreme Court has upheld a lower court decision that the board must abide by its own policy.

A Golden Ruling

English teacher Al Wilder was fired last spring for showing the movie *1900* to students. But the Colorado Court of Appeals has ordered that Wilder, who teaches at Columbine High School in Golden, be reinstated. Teachers must be given "clear, prior" notice of prohibited conduct, says the court, and such prohibitions must be reasonably related to "legitimate pedagogical concern."

She Was Never Alone

When North Carolina teacher Lisa Shubert was sexually harassed on the job by "someone in power," she felt very alone. But then the North Carolina Association of Educators took her case to court, helped her with paperwork, and eased her financial burden. Today Shubert is happily teaching—and her harasser is out of a job. "I've established the respect of my peers because I stood up for my rights," she points out.

Letter of the Law

In Tennessee, a federal judge has ruled in favor of Milan high school teacher Mary Brew, who was reprimanded for writing a letter to a local newspaper criticizing the school board for removing her school's basketball coach. The judge ordered the board to remove a letter of reprimand from Brew's file and enjoined it from "discriminating or retaliating" against her in the future.

Schools for sale: A Texas district has found a new way to commercialize the school environment. Officials in the Grapevine-Colleyville district drew up plans earlier this year to sell ad space on school roofs. The target: advertisers who want to reach passengers headed to the nearby Dallas-Ft. Worth International Airport.

Public school choice: One-third of U.S. school districts with over 10,000 students now have programs that encourage parents to choose the public school their children attend. Some 14 percent of all districts let students attend any school, within the district, they choose. Eight percent of districts overall offer magnet school choice.

Targeting kids: Once again this year, Mattel is the nation's top advertiser on network TV non-animated children's programs. On network cartoon shows, McDonald's is number one. In the "big five" magazines for kids—*Boy's Life*, *Seventeen*, *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, *Teen*, and *YM*—Nike is the leading advertiser.

Separate and unequal: Colleges involved in big-time sports still spend far more per male than female athlete. UCLA, for one, lays out \$39,097 for each male in intercollegiate athletics, \$20,479 for each female. Some schools are narrowing the gap. The University of Michigan figures: \$22,603 and \$18,102, respectively.

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How much
can we get?

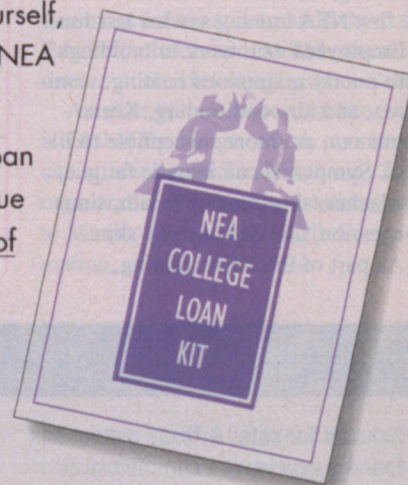
Puzzled by college loans? Call the NEA HELP Line today.

If you have a son or daughter applying for college, or if you're taking courses yourself, you can end the confusion about college loans with a single phone call to NEA HELP,SM the NEA Higher Education Loan Program.SM

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So take the confusion out of getting a college loan and call the toll-free NEA HELP Line at 1-888-4-NEA-HELP today. We'll also send you your free NEA College Loan Kit, including an application. Don't delay. Call now!

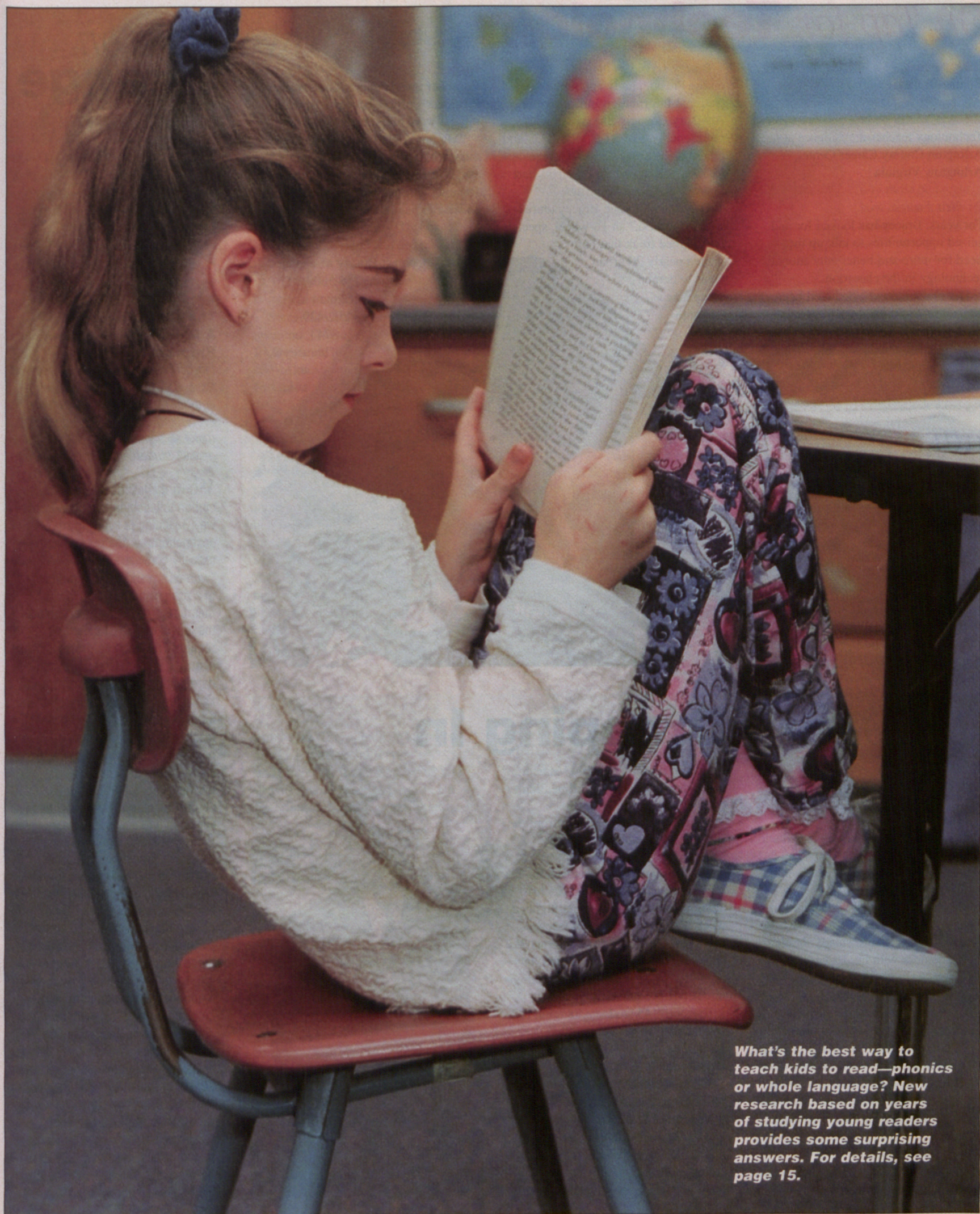


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NELLIE
MAE



What's the best way to teach kids to read—phonics or whole language? New research based on years of studying young readers provides some surprising answers. For details, see page 15.

Rex Larson

Innovators

On Tap for Technology

Innovator:

Bonnie Bracey

Job:

Technology teacher in residence at the Arlington County Career Center, Arlington, Virginia

Bright Idea:

For years, Bracey has looked for and seized opportunities to talk up the need for more and better educational technology in the classroom.

Her reach has extended well beyond education—to the federal government, the telecommunications industry, even the entertainment biz.

Bracey served as the only teacher on the Presidentially appointed National Information Infrastructure Advisory Council. She works with representatives of ATT, MCI, TCI, and other businesses. She's on George Lucas's board, and she's helped start many educational Web sites.

Over the past year, Bracey toured with "CyberEd," an 18-wheel, specially designed truck that has visited nearly 20 urban areas to demonstrate new technologies.

Impact:

From her own county schools to the President's office, Bracey is spreading the word about technology.

"My goal right now is to increase outreach to more teachers," she says. "Teachers have got to be comfortable with the new technologies so we can pass them on to the kids."

For More:

Contact Bracey at 703/358-5800, voice mail at 202/429-8744, or bbracey@aol.com.



Richard Nowitz

Dropouts Are Dropping In

Innovator:

Joel Vanucci

Job:

School counselor, Keystone Oaks High School, Pittsburgh

Bright Idea:

It was a moment all educators can enjoy. A 41-year-old carpenter from a Pittsburgh suburb stands shoulder to shoulder with his 16-year-old son to get his high school diploma.

It was a moment that might not have happened without Project Succeed, the six-year-old brainchild of NEA member Joel Vanucci.

Back in 1990, Vanucci, then dean of students at Keystone Oaks High, noticed a disturbing trend: Each year, more students were quitting school.

"I wanted to know why," he recalls, "so I just started calling as many of the kids who'd dropped out

as I could find." Many told Vanucci they'd come back if class time didn't conflict with time on the job.

So, with help from a grant from the Pittsburgh Foundation, Vanucci launched Project Succeed.

The program offers classes—math, science, social studies, and English, along with an elective—four nights a week. Regular high school teachers and a few college instructors teach the courses. Students pay no tuition, but each must donate 30 hours of community service to get a diploma.

Currently, 45 students, ranging in age from 16 to 51, are enrolled.

Impact:

Since 1990, 63 dropouts have returned to school to get their high school diplomas. Only two have quit a second time. Vanucci hopes to expand Project Succeed by using closed circuit television to link his school with other schools in the Pittsburgh area.

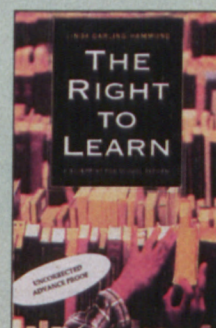


John Heller

For More:

Contact Vanucci at Keystone Oaks High School, 412/571-6066.

More on Change



The Right To Learn: A Blueprint for School Reform

Linda Darling-Hammond. Jossey-Bass, 352 pp., \$25. More than just another report, this book outlines everything that must be done to make all schools good schools, to give all students the right to learn.

"Over the last decade a quiet revolution in teaching has been underway. Teaching is evolving from an occupation that the public has historically considered routine 'women's work' requiring little skill to a profession that enables its members to become as capable as the real demands of the work require. The teaching profession has begun to engage in serious standard setting that reflects a growing knowledge base about teaching and a growing consensus about what teachers should be able to do to help all students learn to high levels. Changes are underway in teacher preparation programs across the country, approaches to licensing and accreditation are being redesigned, and a new National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has created assessments for certifying accomplished teachers. Some school districts and grassroots networks have created partnerships to rethink schools. Yet these efforts, like those in other eras of reform, remain piecemeal—a good idea here and a thriving innovation there. They are as yet unconnected by a set of policies guaranteeing every child access to skillful teaching and every teacher access to the knowledge she needs to teach. Creating a web of always-available supports for students' and teachers' learning is the difficult, unglamorous, but absolutely essential work that will make the difference for our future."

How Kids Learn To Read

Since the mid-1980s, when Congress mandated that the National Institutes of Health study learning disabilities, much attention has centered on the ability to read. Beginning in 1983, NIH researchers began studying such basic questions as why reading difficulties occur, and what can be done to correct them. In 1991, Reid Lyon became chief of the NIH branch that seeks to define what we know—and don't know—about reading.

Q What do you make of the phonics vs. whole language debate?

A I think it's nonsense—children need both. It's an artificial argument that's more of a social and political issue than an educational one. Good teachers know and understand that reading—and teaching reading—requires different skills at different levels.

Q So what skills do children need first?

A Before children can read the English language, they have to

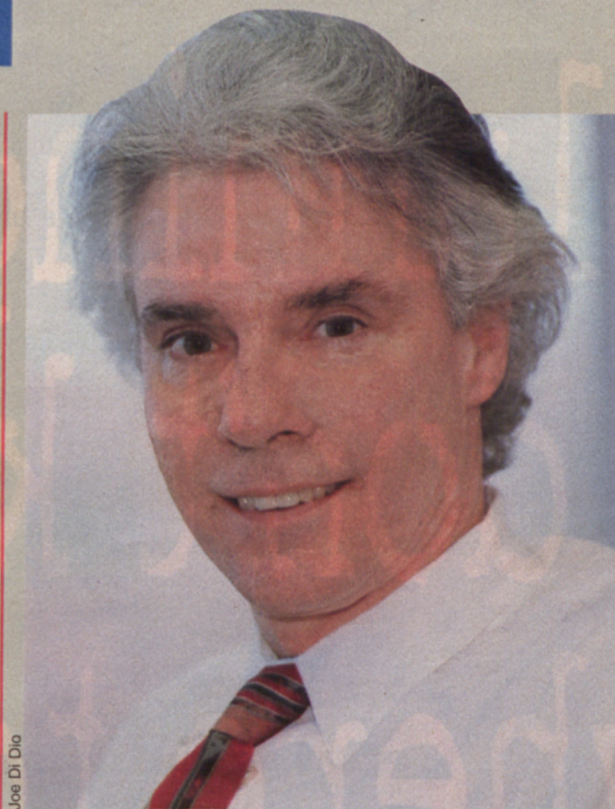
be able to recognize alphabet sounds.

Our research has taught us that for beginning readers to learn how to map or translate printed symbols—letters and letter patterns—to sounds, they must intuitively understand that speech can be segmented and that segmented units of speech can be represented by printed forms. This is the prerequisite to rapid and accurate decoding and word recognition, which in, in turn, are essential for reading comprehension.

Some kids have this “phonological awareness” naturally—others don't. It's the latter that we have to be concerned about. If we get to them early enough, they can be helped.

Q Are teachers teaching reading effectively?

A There is scientific evidence that certain teaching methods are more effective than others. For too long, colleges of education ignored how reading develops—they de-emphasized the teaching of sounds and their relationship to the alphabet. Any language with an alphabet has to be deciphered, sounded-out.



Joe Di Dio

Many teachers have not been taught how reading skills develop—they've been given a “one-size-fits-all approach” to teaching reading. As a result, far too many of the in-vogue curriculums haven't taught children

how to crack the “phonetic awareness” code that underlies reading. At least 40 percent of children nationally must be taught how to crack that code.

We need to balance the teaching of reading—phonological awareness, phonics, and whole language—that ultimately leads to children understanding—and appreciating—the words before them.

For more information, call Rosa Jones at 301/496-9849 and ask for a free copy of the NICHD Learning Disabilities/Disabilities Information Packet: Research Discoveries—Clinical Applications.

He's the Good News Guy

Innovator:

Dan Sparkman

Job:

Special education teacher, King Career Center, Anchorage, Alaska

Bright Idea:

A stream of negative news coverage about Anchorage teens was beginning to get to Dan Sparkman. “Even my own teenage daughters were developing a bit of a defeatist attitude because of all the bad publicity from just a few incidents.”

Moved to respond, Sparkman came up with the idea for a weekly television show featuring all the good things Anchorage teens are doing in their schools and communities.

The series, *Kids Can, and You Can, Too*, has just completed its first season, airing for each of the past 15 weeks on two channels, including the local PBS outlet.

Each 30-minute show has a differ-

ent theme. Topics include students working with social service agencies and churches, students' musical and artistic talents, and teens who care for animals. Short segments high-

light the involvement of teachers.

Funding for the shows comes from local businesses and the Anchorage Education Association.

Impact:

Despite stiff competition from local news and *60 Minutes*, “the show has gotten a great response,” reports Sparkman.

So great, in fact, that Sparkman has created a second show. Called the *Sourdough Joe Show* (that's Dan as Sourdough Joe in the photo), the series is aimed at 2- to 10-year-olds.

For More:

Information about both of Sparkman's programs can be found at www.alaska.net/~akvidmag. Sparkman will send tapes of the two shows to school districts willing to pay the postage.



Jeff Schultz

4 Ways to Encourage Storytelling

Sharing stories about school change can help you make changes at your school. Here are a few tips:

- 1 Set time limits that keep people focused and still allow everyone a chance to participate in the process.
- 2 Listen actively and reflect carefully to ensure constructive dialogue.
- 3 Limit interruptions and save probing questions for the end.
- 4 Some educators may be reluctant to tell their stories. To get people to open up, encourage respect and ensure confidentiality.

Source: *Journey to School Reform: Moving From Reflection to Action Through Storytelling*, NEA Professional Library, 800/229-4200.

"Retirement planning? I don't know where to start."

It's easier than you'd think with the help of a professional.

Don't put off your retirement planning because you're not sure where to begin. Instead, get the help you need to get started from an NEA Valuebuilder Investment Professional (VIP). Together with your VIP you can plan the kind of retirement you're working so hard to achieve.

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NEA VIPs, like Lisa, are retirement planning specialists who can help you better understand your retirement needs, answer your questions, and assist you in choosing the most appropriate investment options. Of course, if you wish to make changes to your annuity investment options at any time, your NEA VIP is always there to help you.

Call now. Let your NEA VIP help you develop the retirement plan that's right for you.

Call today for your no-obligation consultation and we'll send you your FREE NEA Valuebuilder® Retirement Planning Kit.

1-800-637-4636

(Monday-Friday 8am-8pm; Saturday 9am-1pm, ET).

For members residing in Texas, please call 1-800-451-0070.



Lisa Laboo, NEA VIP



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VBNT0597

Inside Scoop

A New Hi-Tech Generation of Textbooks

Definition, please.

There's an alternative to the old, heavy, beat-up, out-of-date textbook you're often forced to use. It's new, light, small, and current. It's called a textbook on CD-ROM.

Some people call these discs "textbook alternatives" or "full courseware on software." Created for the new era of school curriculum, CD-ROM texts have futuristic names like *Social Science 2000* and *Physics for the Computer Age*.

Many of them include lesson plans, student activities, even interactive simulations. Some are computer-based curriculum supplemented by print text.

How hot?

The growth of CD-ROM use tells the story, says Sue Kamp, education market analyst for the Software Publishers Association.

"In 1991, only 7 percent of public schools used CD-ROM," explains Kamp. "In 1996, that number jumped to 54 percent. CD-ROM is the fastest growing educational technology on the market."

Market Data Retrieval, a company that publishes marketplace studies, says CD-ROMs make up more than 50 percent of planned software purchases for school districts.

"Is it any wonder that even traditional textbook publishers are partnering with software companies or creating software divisions to produce CD-ROM and multimedia products?" says SPA's Kamp.

"Software publishers such as Decision Development Corporation are offering their products to schools that want something more than a textbook with chapters," Kamp adds. "Others are even offering connections to the Internet."

In fact, says Kamp, "we in the industry don't even like to use the term CD-ROM textbooks. It's far too limiting, when you know you have links to Web sites imbedded in the text and full sets of resources in the database."

"That's right," says Buzz Ellis, president of Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, publisher of traditional textbooks as well as CD-ROM educational products, including *Physics for the Computer Age*.

"In *Biology: The Dynamics of Life* CD-ROM, for example, the opening



image shows an icon for the textbook, plus icons for a media library, bio-quests, slide-shows and ready-to-go class presentations, and interactive explorations," Ellis says. "Calling it a textbook doesn't really do the resource justice."

How does it work?

With the computer and CD-ROM—and sometimes videodiscs as an additional support—a teacher can call up entire lesson plans, with links to a comprehensive database of resources, maps, and activities.

Interactive software simulations put students in decision-making activities. Teachers can tailor the lessons and activities around specific themes, topics, disciplines, or learning styles.

The lessons are adaptable to a small group or large classroom, and some companies even offer a teaching tips database.

"With DDC's full courseware, for example, we offer a software database and much more," says Larry Nelson, DDC president. "Our art curriculum offers resources and links with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Getty Art Museum."

Why bother?

"With technology such as this, you get a much richer collection of resources for the classroom," says Texas high school teacher Elaine Rodriguez, who uses the *Science 2000* package.

"You don't have to go out and purchase 20 different resources when you have a package that gives you access

to research, data, and artifacts at your fingertips," she says.

"My students have been much more engaged and excited by these kinds of lessons. They're like treasure hunts."

Any downside?

The use of CD-ROM-based curriculum is catching on in some states across the country, but print still rules.

"Despite the upward trends in CD-ROM use," explains Linda Dierstin, president of the State Textbook Directors Association, "there are still plenty of schools that don't have access. That's why printed textbooks will be around for a long time."

"In Indiana, many of our schools don't have the technology to warrant state adoption of anything like CD-ROM or multimedia textbooks," Dierstin says.

"And each state has its own set of adoption rules and processes," she adds. "I haven't seen too many CD-ROM titles reaching the board approval stage."

Another downside: cost. The average CD-ROM costs \$70. And when you put together a classroom package with a teacher's edition and student discs, the cost goes up to about \$700.

"Add to that the equipment required to run CD-ROM products, and you begin to eliminate schools without the necessary funds to purchase today's new multimedia technology," Dierstin says.

What next?

"What I see is a move away from even the concept of a textbook," says Susan Veccia, editor of *MultiMedia Schools* magazine.

"Many of my readers, who are

classroom practitioners, are much more interested in creating their own units and coursework and are eager to shake off the yolk of textbook direction," Veccia says.

"I think teacher-created materials will be the wave of the future," she predicts. "The more products there are, the more our ever-resilient and creative educators and media specialists can do with them."

Need more information?

■ The Software Publishers Association provides information on CD-ROM and multimedia, plus trends in the software publishing industry. SPA has a searchable Web site, with links to companies and a database of all SPA members. You can call it up at www.spa.org.

■ *CD-ROM for Schools: A Directory and Practical Handbook for Media Specialists* by Pam Berger and Susan Kinnel was published by Eight Bit Books in 1994. \$29.95 plus \$5 s&h. To order, contact Eight Bit Books/Online, Inc., 800/248-8466.

■ *MultiMedia Schools* magazine (Six issues per year, \$38) is written primarily by and for educators using various forms of technology. It offers practical how-to information and product reviews. \$38/year. To order, contact *MultiMedia Schools*, Information Today, 143 Old Marlton Pike, Medford, NJ 08055, 609/654-6266.

■ *Electronic Learning* magazine (Scholastic, six issues per year, \$23.95) is a useful resource if you want to know anything about technology in the classroom. For details, go to <http://scholastic.com/EL>.

■ For more information on Glencoe/McGraw-Hill's CD-ROM textbooks, go to www.glencoe.com.

Look to the Future

Educators who want a preview of education in the next century, should make early plans to attend the 11th annual Technology and Learning Conference to be held November 5-7 in Denver, Colorado.

NEA members can receive a substantial discount on registration fees. For more information, call the NEA Center for Education Technology at 202/822-7354 or visit NEA's Web site at www.nea.org/cet.

Students &

Good Stuff

Inspiring Quality

How do you find, create, or measure quality in your school? A new book from the NEA Professional Library, *Inspiring Quality in Your School*, by Robert Sullo, has the answers. \$14.95 for NEA members, \$16.95 for non-members, s&h added to all orders. Stock #2951-8-00-0. To order, call 800/229-4200.

Secondary Math

Interested in sharing tips, resources, and assessment tools? Take a look at the Secondary Mathematics Assessment and Resource Database, a Web site full of tips and helpful information. Call it up at <http://cqpan.cqu.edu.au/schools/smad/smad.html>.

Teaching Tips

Elementary and middle school teachers looking for fun and educational teaching tips and resources should check out Teachers' Turf, a new Web site offering a variety of classroom activities and exercises as well as teaching tips from your colleagues. Take a look at www.troll.com/teachers/index.html.

Free Resource Guide

Creative Partnerships for Prevention: Using the Arts and Humanities to Build Resiliency in Youth is a new resource guide for schools, arts and humanities organizations, and other youth agencies. The guide, designed with drug and violence prevention in mind, outlines activities for middle and high school students. Free until August 1. Fax your name and school name to the Learning Systems Group, 202/628-3020 or go to www.CPPPprev.org.

HIV Education

The National Science Teachers Association and Abbott Laboratories, with the help of the National Institutes of Health, have created *The Science of HIV*, a new high school curriculum to teach students the science behind HIV and AIDS. For details, contact NSTA, 1840 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201-3000, 800/722-NSTA.

Deaf World

A Web site and a magazine, *Deaf World*, offers news, socio-cultural resources, and discussion forums in eight languages. Point your browser to <http://deafworld.org/dww/>.

You know you have a problem when...

"You have a student crawling on the floor and screaming at you."

Julie Gabber, third grade teacher, Greenfield Elementary School, Salinas, California

Dilemma

When Spring Fever Spreads

How do you harness the extra energy kids have during the last month of school?

As an eighth grade English teacher, I try to pick and choose my writing assignments. I assign the heavy writing during the winter months, when concentration is high. During the month of May, I try to give lighter writing assignments. I also ask the students to build projects and present them to the class.

Beth Christensen
Eighth grade English teacher
Mankato, Minnesota

Last year I captured my students' end-of-the-year energy by having them perform the rock opera *Stone Soup*. The children made their own costumes, built the sets and learned their parts—all while doing their regular school work. We were able to increase the fun level to keep students interested, while still maintaining the rigor of classroom assignments.

Chris Clarke
Middle school assistant principal
Alexandria, Virginia

Instead of simply lecturing to students, I try to keep them involved and motivated by assigning a number of outdoor activities dealing with plants and soil.

Arthur Green
High school agricultural science and technology teacher
Elkton, Kentucky

I teach home economics, so I try to teach the food portion of my lessons toward the end of the year.

That way I can use the cooking classes as leverage with the students



when they get too antsy. I tell them they can either finish their reading or lose a cooking day. They calm down.

We cook all sorts of dishes up and down the food pyramid, so there's always something interesting to prepare. It keeps things moving along.

Marlene John
Home economics teacher
Ogden, Utah

I let them run it out. As a physical education teacher, there's nothing like a little physical activity to help students release the pent-up energy they have toward the end of the year. The more physical games and activities I give them, the better they feel.

Joan Van Blom
Elementary physical education teacher
Long Beach, California

I start planning for next year's programs. As head of a large extracurricular organization called Club Reading is Fundamental (R.I.F.), I'm

in charge of a number of activities that take place in September and August, including a large assembly with about 400 students.

Because the assembly—complete with scenes and scripts—is so time-consuming, we start planning in May. I've found that the energy level of the students is high this time of year, and that many seniors look at the work as the legacy they leave behind for other students.

Pat Heck
High school reading teacher
Mesa, Arizona

Got a Question?

Do you have a dilemma in need of an answer? Send your dilemma to us by regular mail, Fax 202/822-7206, or E-mail at dilemma2@nea.org. Include your name, educational position, and phone numbers.

Strategies

You know you've been successful when...

"Your students are proud of their Navajo heritage and culture."

Kellamay Kelly, K-2 teacher, Sawmill Elementary School, Sawmill, Arizona

Delight

Great Expectations, Results

A New Orleans elementary school boosts student achievement—by asking for more.

Six years ago, Cherry Street Elementary School students' scores on state achievement tests were among the worst in the entire state of Louisiana. Today, they're in the top 20.

Six years ago, parents were pulling their kids out of Cherry Street. Today, they're eager to get their kids into the school, since renamed Clifton.

They're drawn by the parish's only elementary school multi-media lab, the school's technology-rich programs, and its record of academic success.

Why the turn-around?

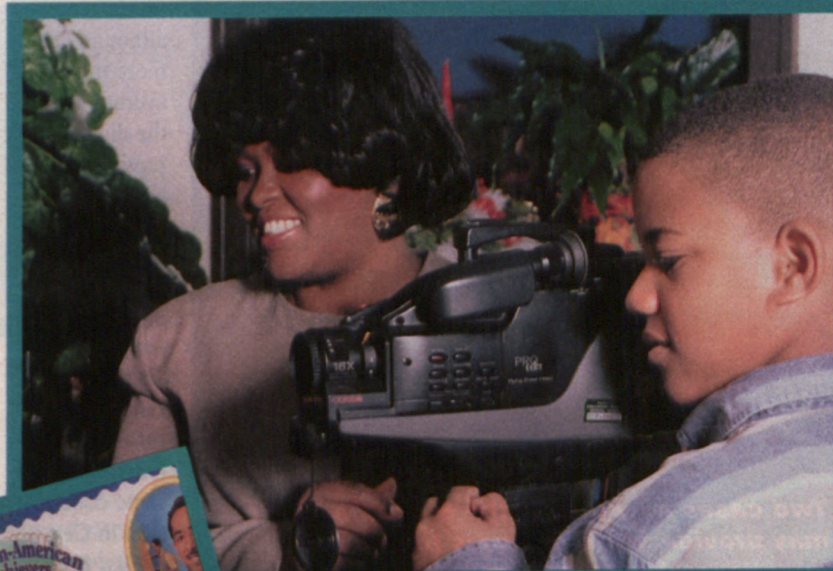
"You could say that it was the school's huge investment in technology," says Jacqueline Brown, Clifton's multi-media coordinator.

Six years ago, aided by a federal grant and local bond that targeted Clifton, the school was able to put a computer, television set, and telephone in each classroom, buy portable multi-media workstations, establish a professional development computer lab for teachers, and create a link to the Internet.

"Yes, you could say it was the technology," says Brown.

"But you'd be wrong."

At the time school employees applied for the grants, Brown



NEA member Jacqueline Brown helps students at Clifton Elementary produce daily news reports that are broadcast to all classes via closed circuit television.



explains, they also went through a

"vision" change. "We had

a new administrator and a new attitude that said, 'Let's raise our expectations of these children up to the highest level.' So that's what we did.

"Our belief in our students, coupled with new leadership, led us past the naysayers who wondered whether our students would take care of, let alone use, the new technology."

Once Clifton's staffers got started, they didn't look back. They convinced a local plant to provide technological support. And they continued to write grants for equipment.

"With our use of the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) program, which helped us set students' sights even higher, we began to see results," Brown adds.

"Students were drawn to new ways of learning stimulated by the techno-

logy and motivated by the staff," she says.

Even the parents were drawn in.

"I created weekly computer time for the parents," says Brown. "On Wednesdays, they came in and did resumés, computer searches for parenting info, even job searches. Pretty soon, they were just as excited about learning as the students. And the students enjoyed giving presentations to their parents. It just added to their motivation."

Each year since the "vision" change, Clifton student achievement scores have gone up. The lesson, according to Brown: Technology alone won't improve academics.

"The key," she says, "is that we brought the whole community together around learning, and we set the sky as the limit."

For more information about Clifton's program, contact Jacqueline Brown at queenja@aol.com.

Idea Exchange

Going to Town

I use Sim City 2000 software by Maxis every year—it never fails to energize students. As my sixth graders get into groups and create their cities on the computer, they learn so much about money and development issues.

On the day of the City Fair, I invite guests to see what the students have done. This year, our own city celebrates 150 years, so I'm adding an extra twist to the Fair. You can find out more about it by visiting us on the Web at www.pimulti.com/cities.

Susan Baroody

New Bedford, Massachusetts

Theatrical Connections

To bring our students and community together, I created an intergenerational drama program, which pairs high school students with their parents, grandparents, family, and friends to work on projects tied to a play that's being performed locally.

The students and adults work on projects, do reading and research about the play, and then attend the play together. They also get a chance to meet the director, performers, and technical crew. It's a great way to form a theatrical bond.

Ann Garret

Mt. Vernon, Illinois

Nutrition Lessons Add Up

To teach math and healthy living skills to fourth grade students, we combine math activities with home economic ones. We combine trips to the grocery store, cooking and baking lessons, and healthy eating practices with math assignments.

At the same time, we set up an in-class grocery store in math class so students can learn about eating healthy and nutritious foods.

Mary Erwin

Wheeling, West Virginia

Share Your Ideas

You can pass along your classroom tips to NEA Today's 2.2 million readers in one of these four ways:

- By Mail:
NEA Today, 1201 16th St. N.W.,
Washington, DC 20036
- By phone: 202/822-7201
- By Fax: 202/822-7206
- By E-mail:
Ideas@neatoday.nea.org

Rights Watch

Who's Paying for Special Ed?

Do public schools have to foot the bill for special education services in private schools?

That question may soon be answered by two cases now pending before the Supreme Court.

If the Court says "yes," many fear that public school districts will be socked with enormous bills for a wide array of special education services now provided by parents or private schools.

At issue is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law that requires public schools to provide a "free appropriate public education" to students with disabilities.

Under current law, every school has to develop an "individualized education program" (IEP) for each disabled student that identifies the "special education" and "related" services the student needs to learn effectively.

And the school district has to pay for these services, which can include transportation, occupational therapy, full-time education aides, nursing services, and the like.

In recent years, parents who voluntarily enrolled their disabled children in private and parochial schools have sued their local public school districts, demanding that they pay for these special services provided in private schools.

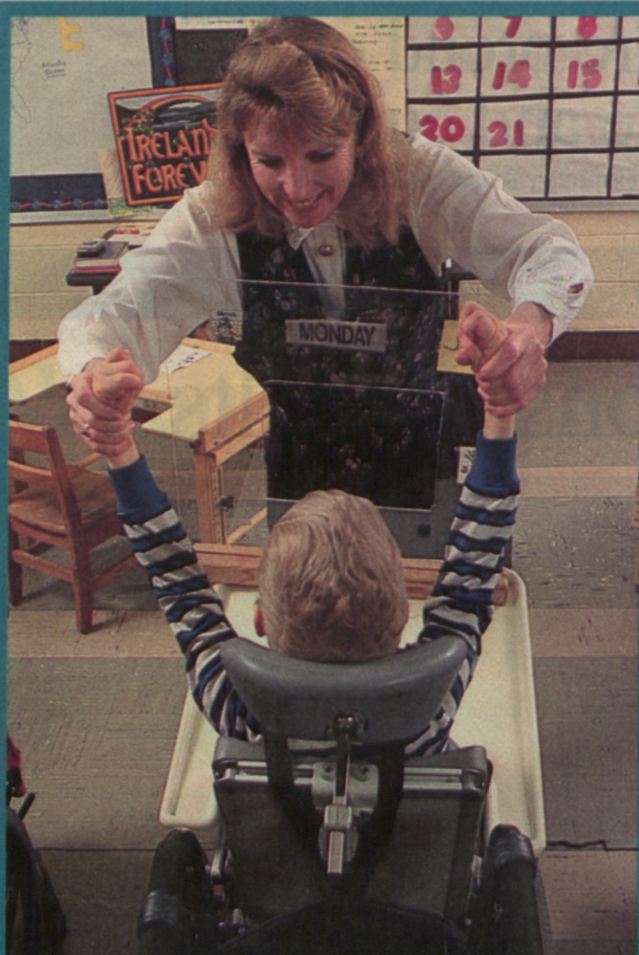
Can school districts be forced to pay? According to recent decisions by five different federal circuit courts, the answer is "yes," "no," or "it depends."

IDEA says that special education and related services have to be "provided" to students voluntarily enrolled in private schools. The federal courts disagree over what that word means.

■ In *Goodall by Goodall v. Stafford County School Board*, for example, the parents of a deaf student enrolled at a Christian school sued their local school board seeking a full-time interpreter.

In a 1991 decision, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the claim, holding that the district met its IDEA obligations to "provide" special ed services by offering to provide interpreter services at a public school.

■ Last year, the Seventh Circuit reached the same conclusion in *K.R. by M.R. v. Anderson Community*



Gary Emeligh

Two cases now before the Supreme Court may provide some answers to lingering questions about the scope of IDEA.

School District.

Originally enrolled in public school, "K.R." suffered from spina bifida and was wheelchair-bound. The student's IEP called for a full-time instructional assistant, plus transportation and speech and occupational therapy.

After the parents enrolled her in a parochial school, the school district refused to provide an instructional assistant at the private school, but continued to provide transportation and therapy services at a public school.

In upholding the school's refusal, the Seventh Circuit held that IDEA does not require public schools "to make comparable provisions for a disabled student voluntarily attending private school as for disabled public school students."

But three other circuit courts have reached a very different conclusion.

■ Last February, the Tenth Circuit held that a school district has to pay for or provide a sign language interpreter for a deaf student attending private school.

The court in *Fowler v. Unified School District No. 259* said that the

school district does not meet its IDEA obligations merely by "offering" to provide the services on public school grounds.

Rather, it has to pay the cost of providing a private school interpreter, although not more than the average cost to the district of providing interpretive services to hearing-impaired students in the public schools.

■ In January, the Fifth Circuit reached the same conclusion in *Cefalu v. East Baton Rouge Parish School Board*,

holding that a public school district was responsible for funding a sign language interpreter for a deaf student attending a sectarian school, so long as the cost is the same as providing the service in a public school.

■ And last year, the Second Circuit in *Russman by Russman v. Sobol* applied this principle to insist that a district provide a "consultant teacher" and a "teaching aide" for a mentally retarded student attending a Catholic school. Otherwise, the court cautioned, the student would be "forced to abandon her choice of school."

Both *Russman* and *Anderson* are now pending before the Supreme Court.

Since the federal appellate courts are in such disagreement over what IDEA means, it's likely the Supreme Court will hear one or both of the appeals.

As the *Fowler* court lamented, "This is an area in which Supreme Court guidance is needed, and, we hope, forthcoming."

—Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

More on IDEA

IDEA continues to produce a flurry of litigation, as courts struggle to define and clarify schools' obligations under the law. Here are some of the significant cases decided recently.

■ The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled that IDEA does not prohibit schools from expelling disabled students for misconduct unrelated to their disabilities and cutting off IDEA services.

The 11-2 *en banc* decision specifically rejects the U.S. Department of Education's position that—under IDEA—school districts must continue providing special education services to disabled students who are expelled or suspended long-term for serious misconduct unrelated to their disabilities.

The court's ruling in *Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education v. Riley* means that Virginia no longer has to educate 126 disabled students who have been expelled from school.

■ Also in February, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Community School District has to provide a full-time nurse to care for a quadriplegic student.

While IDEA doesn't require schools to provide "medical services" to disabled students, it does mandate the provision of "related services" necessary for the student to benefit from special education.

The court in *Cedar Rapids Community School District v. Garret F.* held that because continuous, one-on-one nursing services are provided by a nurse, rather than a doctor, they are not "medical services" excluded from the Act.

The Eighth Circuit's decision directly conflicts with a 1995 Sixth Circuit case holding that a school doesn't have to provide one-on-one nursing care.

■ Finally, the Third Circuit ruled in 1995 that individual school employees—including teachers—can be sued for damages for failing to identify, evaluate, and offer special ed services to a student with disabilities within a reasonable time.

The parent in *W.B. v. Matula*, claimed that school officials violated the IDEA by taking more than six months to recognize that her son had ADHD and to formulate an IEP, despite her repeated requests for evaluation and placement.

Health

Can You Drink the Water?



Charlene Shaw is the program coordinator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, where she

manages the Environmental Education Program. Shaw spoke recently with Christine Luong, a staff member from the NEA Health Information Network.

Is contaminated water a big problem in the U.S.?

In 1995, some 21 million Americans were served by drinking water systems that violated one or more

public health standards. Most of these violations were of microbiological standards, threatening acute illness.

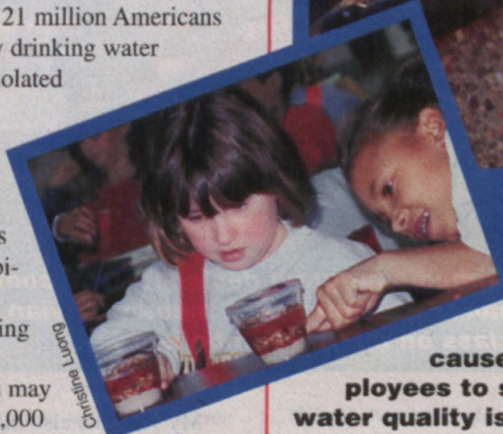
In 1993, you may remember, 403,000 people in Milwaukee became ill from the waterborne parasite *Cryptosporidium*, and 100 deaths have been attributed to this contamination. Most experts believe that, under certain conditions, an outbreak on the scale of Milwaukee's is possible in other regions in the United States.

Can contaminated water cause childhood illness?

Children's bodies are not yet fully developed, so exposure to toxic substances may affect their growth and development. For some drinking water contaminants, such as nitrate and lead, the most sensitive group of the population is children.



These students (left) are creating aquifers—in-ground water reservoirs—in a cup as part of an EPA workshop on water quality.



What would cause school employees to suspect that water quality is a problem?

If you see any change in the color or smell of water in your school, call your local water supplier. If your school has a well on school property, investigate any activity around the wellhead that is causing or could cause contamination.

Any acute violation of a drinking water regulation would become obvious. Most bacterial contamination causes stomach distress and diarrhea.

If there is a serious violation, water systems have 24 hours to inform their customers. You'll find out about less serious violations by reading your water bill. By 1999, EPA will require each community water system to mail to each consumer, at least once a year,

a report on the levels of contaminants in the drinking water they serve.

What should you do if your water is contaminated by the pipes, not the source?

The most common of these problems is lead—and the longer water has been sitting in lead or lead-soldered pipes, the more lead it can contain. At home, anytime the water in a particular faucet hasn't been used for six hours or longer, flush your cold-water pipes by running the water until it becomes as cold as it will get. Since schools aren't open 24 hours a day, water sitting unused in pipes is a particular concern. It's best to have your school's water tested.

How?

If you're on a public water supply, your water supplier has probably tested the water—check to be sure. But if you're your own water supplier and have not tested for lead, you should.

EPA has a video available to show you how to collect the samples for these tests—and what to do if you find it. You can borrow the video by calling the the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800/426-4791.

How can educators learn more about water quality?

Read the fliers that come with your water bill, find out where your water comes from and what's being done to protect it, and take advantage of any tours offered by your local water filtration plant. Protection of drinking water is a concern for all of us.

From the Network

The NEA Health Information Network provides members with resources that promote the health and well-being of education employees and their students. These resources are currently recommended:

Radon Action Kits

The Radon/Indoor Air Project program of the National Association of Counties' (NACo) provides information to counties about the health hazards of radon and poor indoor air quality, and local measures counties can undertake to reduce their citizens' exposure.

For free materials, such as the County Radon Action Kit and information on how your county can help reduce the health risks associated with poor indoor air quality, call Lou Witt at 202/942-4261.

Buckle Up for Safety

May 18-24 is Buckle Up America! Week. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration provides free Occupant Protection Planners, which include information on seat belt usage, school bus safety, child passenger safety, and pedestrian safety. Call 202/366-0910. Or visit www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

Poison Prevention

July 20-26 is Lead Poison Control Week. For details on the dangers of lead in water and soil and how to deal with them, contact the National Lead Information Center at 800/LEAD-FYI.

Cholesterol Education

Worried about your cholesterol? September is National Cholesterol Education Month. For information, visit the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Web page at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/nhlbi/nhlbi.htm.

Help with the Tough Questions

It's Perfectly Normal—a book for young people about puberty, changing bodies, sex, and sexual health—provides accurate answers to typical kids' questions and prompts safe, responsible decisions. For ages 10 and up. \$9.99 plus \$2 s&h. Available in bookstores or from Candlewick Press, 2067 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140, 800/331-4624.

Resources

■ May 4-10, 1997 is National Drinking Water Week. Throughout the week, local groups sponsor pollution-fighting efforts as part of the Blue Thumb Project. For more information, call 800/926-7337 or go to www.awwa.org/bluethum.htm.

■ For information about safe drinking water, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and other related issues, call the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800/426-4791.

■ The EPA Office of Water publishes a Drinking Water Instructional Materials packet, worksheets, water trivia, conservation tips, and more. Contact the Office of Water Resource Center (RC4100) U.S. EPA, 401 M St., S.W., Washington, DC 20460. Or visit www.epa.gov/OGWDW.

■ For information on the Groundwater Foundation, the Children's Groundwater Festival, and the newsletter, *The Aquifer*, call 800/858-4844.

Bits & Bytes

New & Noteworthy

Acceptable Use

"Creating Acceptable Use Policies," a new CD-ROM kit available in Mac and PC format, provides advice from experts, an attorney-authored chapter on legal matters, actual examples of 30 schools' AUPs, an easily customized AUP applicable to most situations, and samples of letters to help get the process started at your school. \$79 from Classroom Connect. Call 800/638-1639.

Planning for Technology

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) has a new professional development program covering the most important elements of technology planning. The four-workshop series includes two videotapes, a facilitator's guide with handouts and overheads, and examples of how schools have successfully planned for technology. \$396 for ASCD members, \$466 for non-members. Call 800/933-2723.

Earhart's Footsteps

Students can join in on a 60th anniversary re-creation of Amelia Earhart's attempt to fly around the world with "You Can Soar," an Internet-based project found at worldflight.org/youcansoar. Participants can track the flight, which began in Oakland, California in March, and read pilot Linda Finch's log as she crossed the United States, South America, Africa, Australia, and Asia.

French Lessons

Learn the language, culture, history, and geography of France with "Learn to Speak French" 6.0, available in Windows and Mac format. There are 30 lessons on two CDs, and a 400-page workbook is included. \$109 from the Learning Company, Inc., 617/494-1200.

Japanese Lessons

Pacific Software Publishing presents a free Japanese language course suitable for ages 14 and older. The 16 lessons, built around the experiences of an American high school senior and his family who have just transferred to Tokyo, include dialogue, grammar, vocabulary, and sound files. The lessons can be found at www.japanese-online.com.

Friendly User

Good Sign for Deaf Students

Who:

Vivian Dalmas, special ed teacher at Athens Drive High School, Raleigh, North Carolina

E-mail address:

dalmas@mindspring.com

What:

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students learn about great works of literature through a multimedia program that focuses on the visual.

Inspiration:

"Like many teachers, I look forward to introducing my students to great works of literature. Unlike most, my audience consists of 17 students who are deaf or hearing-impaired.

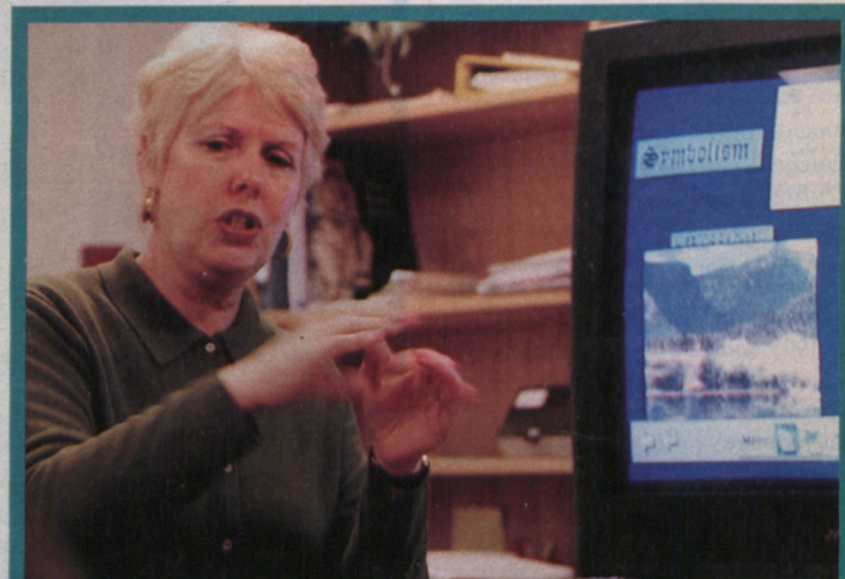
"So I've created a program for my students using visually rich multimedia. The program is based on workshops that I've attended at Gallaudet University, with programs developed by Dr. Cindy King.

"The goal is for the program to be interactive.

"For vocabulary, students develop a glossary at the computer. They define the words, write sentences, and illustrate the meaning using CAPMEDIA.

"This is hyperlinked to text they're studying. When they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, they can click on the hotword, and the glossary appears.

"Tools like these benefit all students, not just the deaf. So these programs are shared with the English department. And I team teach with a regular teacher in an English 11 class, which four of my hearing-impaired



Using a multimedia program designed to accommodate hearing-impaired students, NEA member Vivian Dalmas teaches a class on literary symbolism.

students attend.

"John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* is one of the works the class has been concentrating on. As part of the lesson, we watch a movie version of the book—a version on laserdisc that's been closed-captioned.

"When we encounter new vocabulary words, we stop and discuss their meaning—a feature that ESL teachers have also found useful.

"The same applies to literary terms. We can go back in the text—and to the screen—and find illustrations of terms such as 'symbolism' and 'foreshadowing,' then talk about how they're used to add context and texture to a story or character.

"My students also make clips from scenes in the movie and compare it to the text or analyze the characters.

"And for extra credit, they compose songs on themes pertaining to the book, like loneliness. They sing their compositions right into the computer, which translates their voices into waves thanks to a sound card. Then the waves are captioned with the students' lyrics using CAPMEDIA.

"The multimedia station that makes so much of this possible was purchased with a Christa McAuliffe fellowshipship."

Click:

"For technology to be successful, it's got to be interactive. Anytime students have input, they get creative—and excited about learning."

Bytes for Beginners

Computers can be specially outfitted with devices like touch screens and alternative keyboards for use by those with special needs.

But once you have the necessary hardware, you need to select software that will truly accommodate the special needs student.

Some guidelines to follow:

- Before you finalize your software purchase, always test-drive it to make sure it'll be easy for your students to use.
- Check to see that the program can be varied to fit the individual

learner. For example, can the pace, level of difficulty, and type of remediation be adjusted?

■ Can the size and color of the text be changed to accommodate the individual student's needs?

■ Are the keystrokes uncomplicated and easy to learn?

■ Can a partially finished exercise be saved so it can be completed at a later date?

■ Does the program have features that will hold the student's interest over time, even those students with attention deficit disorder?

More About:

On the World Wide Web, educators working with special needs students can find support and resources. The site for the Teaching Exceptional Children Journal (www.edc.org/FSC/NCIP) features an area where journal readers can discuss one topic from each issue with the authors. Special Education Resources on the Internet (www.hood.edu/seri/serihome.htm), a continuously updated site, links to many special education resources—sites on attention deficit disorder, speech impairment, special needs and technology, and more.

Click Here

How Young Is Too Young?

Few people question why older kids need computers. But what about preschoolers and children in early elementary grades?

Of the 4,000 educational programs now available on store shelves, more than 500 are for preschoolers alone. NEA's Center for Education Technology weighs the pros and cons of plunking preschoolers and early elementary kids behind a keyboard.

Why encourage young kids to spend more time glued to a tube?

Computers, if used constructively, can enrich a child's life much more than television.

"A computer can be a natural part of our children's lives, like paper and crayons or sand and water are," says Jane Steelman, an instructional technology specialist. "Young children, given the opportunity to explore and play at the computer, will come to see it as another useful tool."

When should parents or educators introduce a child to a computer?

There's no "right" age. Kids as young as one or two are eager to get their hands on a keyboard or mouse. And



they're capable of grasping the basics.

At the Fort Lewis College Child Development Center in Colorado, preschoolers learned the basics of computers from center teachers. The children, in turn, taught their parents how to use computers.

What 'value' do children get from using computers?

Basically, the same value adults do. When young children see adults reading or writing, they imitate the action. The same goes for computers.

"They don't realize the reasons for doing these activities, but they know that the activities must be important

because people who are important to them are doing them," says Steelman.

There's no evidence that suggests kids lose out if they're not exposed to computers at an early age. But studies show that under the right conditions, computers encourage reading and writing, help develop problem-solving skills, and improve social relationships.

What should you look for when buying educational software?

Guidelines from the National Association for the Education of Young Children are critical of software that uses the drill-and-practice approach.

S.W. Haughland and D.D. Shade, authors of *A Checklist for Evaluating Software for Young Children*, say the best software incorporates active learning, child-controlled interaction, and experimentation. Good software also operates from picture menus and lets children set the pace and stop anytime.

Experts stress that for technology to work in public schools or home situations where there might not always be a "helping hand," young children must learn to be independent users of technology. So good software also allows for a child to fly solo.

Web Winners

Teachers' Choice

Let other educators know about favorite Web sites that you've used either in the classroom or for professional development. A searchable database of teacher-tested Web sites is being built at Teachers' Choice, located at www.gsh.org/wce/choice.htm.

For Kids by Kids

The K.I.D.S. (Kids Identifying and Discovering Sites) Report is a Web publication for K-12 students written by K-12 students from Colorado's Boulder Valley and Wisconsin's Madison Metropolitan school districts. At rs.internic.net/scout/KIDS/index.html, past issues are posted and you can sign up for an E-mail subscription.

Eye on the Weather

WeatherEye, a weather education site (weathereye.kgan.com) created by an Iowa news team working with local educators, offers a section for students in grades 2-8 and another for students in grades 6-12. Lesson plans put students in real-life weather situations, like driving through a blizzard.

Mind on Math?

Math lessons are now available at a site called Math-On-Line (www.kqed.org/fromKQED/Cell/math/mathmenu.html). Sponsored by San Francisco's KQED, the site also offers tutorials and math history.

Neat Science

Interested in a virtual frog dissection? Didn't know New Jersey Online had a Worm World site, or that there's a Web site called Neuroscience for Kids? Then it's time to check out home.unicom.net/~warnerr, created by NEA member Randy Warner, a Kansas science teacher. This site, filled with links to fascinating sites in a broad range of scientific fields, features an area that helps you do your own searches on the Web.

Technology's Impact

Does technology improve the education of K-12 students? Visit www.mcrel.org/connect/impact.html to find links to surveys, bibliographies, literature reviews, articles, reports, and case studies that will help you reach your own conclusions.

Screen Shot

MYSTERY ON MARS

No sooner do Iz and Auggie arrive for a much-needed vacation on Mars than Auggie and his Martian files disappear. Who's behind this? Could it be that there really is life on Mars? You'll have to dig up the vital scientific data they need to get to the bottom of this astronomical adventure.



An all new Headbone Derby especially for schools, starting March 16th.

"Mystery on Mars," a Web-based comic strip mystery from Headbone Interactive, motivates students to do online research on the astronomy, geology, and history of Mars by making the story dependent on their answers. The site (derby.headbone.com) dovetails with NASA's "Live from Mars" curricular Web site (quest.arc.nasa.gov/mars).

myth:

All money market accounts are pretty much the same. You might as well open one at your local bank.

The fact is, an NEA-Sponsored FDIC-Insured Money Market Account offers you one of the highest interest rates available nationwide. Our rates have consistently beaten or matched the best money market rates as ranked by *Money* magazine.*

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cycle. In addition, you earn a 1% bonus interest for the first 60 days. Furthermore, each account is FDIC-insured by our issuing bank, MBNA America, one of the top-rated banks for safety.**

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Other Money Market Accounts	2.26% (as of 2/26/97)
Other Money Market Accounts	2.53% (as of 2/26/97)
Other Money Market Accounts	2.63% (as of 2/26/97)
Other Money Market Accounts	2.53% (as of 2/26/97)

5.36% APY

* Money magazine, March 1997.

** U.S. Banker magazine, April 1996.

[†] For the NEA-Sponsored FDIC-Insured Money Market Account the minimum amount to open the account and obtain the Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is \$500. For balances of \$50,000 or more the APY is 5.63%. The APYs are valid from 2/24/97–3/2/97 and are based on a bonus rate of 1% for the first 60 days. The current annual percentage yields without the bonus are:

balances of less than \$500	4.66%
balances of \$500 to \$49,999	5.18%
balances of \$50,000 or more	5.45%

The rates may change after the account is opened. Fees could reduce the earnings of the account. All other bank rates are accurate as of 2/26/97, based on a \$2,500 minimum opening balance, and the rates may be higher for higher balances. Source: Meyer Interest Rate Survey.

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Now you can end the shopping, endless paperwork and long waiting involved in getting a mortgage or home equity loan!

With the NEA Home Financing ProgramSM from NEA Member Benefits, provided by Norwest Mortgage, Inc., you can apply for your mortgage or home equity loan right over the phone.

You'll enjoy competitive rates as well as a \$150 refund after closing on your home purchase or refinancing.* You can also get a loan commitment** before you shop for a home and a special low down payment option.

If you already own your home, you can borrow up to 100% of its value with our home equity loans. You'll get competitive rates, including a special member discount, the option to roll closing costs right into your loan, and a possible tax deduction (consult a tax advisor for details). It's the smart way to make major purchases, home improvements, or consolidate your monthly expenses.

With the NEA Home Financing Program, you'll get a fast loan decision. Experienced counselors will guide you through the entire process. And the Program is open to your parents and children as well.

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(1-800-632-4968)



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Credit subject to approval. *Offer is subject to change without notice. **Loan commitment is subject to the terms and conditions stated in the commitment letter. The NEA is not offering or originating any loans in connection with this program. The NEA does not take or process applications, or approve or deny loans. This Program is administered by Norwest Mortgage, Inc. which processes, originates, and services loans. The Home Equity Program is administered by Norwest Direct, a division of Norwest Bank Colorado, N.A., an equal opportunity lender and member of the FDIC. Norwest Mortgage, Inc. originates loans from its principal office in Arizona under License No. BK 7551, originates loans in California under a license issued by the Department of Real Estate, originates loans in Massachusetts under License No. ML 0274, is a licensed Mortgage Banker - NYS Banking Department and is a Georgia, Illinois, and Rhode Island Residential Mortgage Lender. The special benefits of the NEA Home Financing Program are available by calling the toll-free number listed above, and cannot be combined with any other offer. Equal Housing Opportunity Lender.

Heads Up!

TV Tips

CNN Newsroom:

Hong Kong in Transition

Turner Network, Thursday, May 1, 4:30-5 a.m., Friday, May 2, 4:30-5 a.m., ET. This look at political and economic changes in China focuses on the transfer of Hong Kong and the constant struggle between Taiwan and China. Get a study guide from this Web site: www.learning.turner.com.



The Secret Garden

ABC, Part I, Saturday, May 3; Part II, Saturday, May 10, check local listings for time. This classic story follows Mary Lennox, a young orphan who's sent to live with her uncle and finds a magical garden on the castle grounds.

The Federalist Papers

PBS, Fridays, May 2-23, 10-11 p.m., ET. In this series, current political questions are considered against the backdrop of *The Federalist Papers*, written 200 years ago by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. Get a viewer's guide by contacting David Reisman at 212/560-6649 or visiting www.wnet.org.

Kids and Guns

Nickelodeon, Wednesday, May 14, 5:30-6 a.m., ET. This special shows real-life examples of how guns have affected the lives of young kids and their families. This program airs early to allow for taping.

The Odyssey

NBC, Sunday, May 18, Monday, May 19, 9-11 p.m., ET. This mini-series tells Homer's story of Odysseus, who struggles to return home after the Trojan War.

The Suez Crisis

PBS, Monday, May 19, 10-11 p.m., ET. Marking the 40th anniversary of the Suez Crisis, this special provides an historical overview and analysis of the event's impact on the Middle East.

Frankenstein:

The True Story

The Sci-Fi Channel, Friday, May 23, 7-11 p.m., ET. The haunting Mary Shelley tale of a young Dr. Frankenstein and his attempts to create life and cheat death.

The Body Trap

Nickelodeon, Wednesday, May 28, 5:30-6 a.m., ET. Rosie O'Donnell is featured in this special about body image, which includes a look at the role and responsibility of the media in shaping our image of ourselves. This program airs early to allow for taping.

Inspector Gadget's Field Trip

The History Channel, Sundays in May, 7-8 p.m., ET.

The History Channel takes kids on a tour of the world's most interesting places, from London and Paris to Africa, China, and Japan. Animated and live-action tours are led by Inspector Gadget, whose voice is provided by Don Adams of *Get Smart* fame.

Adventures from the Book of Virtues

PBS, Sundays, May, 1-1:30 p.m.

ET. This one-hour animated series features stories adapted from the world's greatest literature, including Greek mythology, African legends, Asian folktales, and fairy tales. The stories illustrate universal themes of courage, self-discipline, honesty, and more.

Jump Start to a Summer Job

Knowledge TV, Sundays in May, 1-1:30 p.m., ET. Career counselors provide job hunting tips that give students a competitive edge. Get a free workbook by calling 800/777-6463 or going to www.jec.edu.



Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales for Every Child

HBO, weekly in May/June, check local listings for dates and time. This series, retelling classic tales with a multicultural twist, returns with 13 new episodes includ-

ing *Pinocchio*, *Puss in Boots*, and *The Shoemaker and the Elves*. Plus, a new take on Mother Goose—*Mother Gooseberg: A Rappin' and a Rhymin' Special*.

The Story of Mothers and Daughters

ABC, May, check local listings for date and time. This special, hosted by actress Patricia Richardson, looks at the complex relationship between



mothers and daughters. For a study guide produced by KIDSNET, call 800/647-4ABC.

Robin Cook's Invasion

NBC, May, check local listings for date and time. This four-hour mini-series is for science-fiction lovers. In the show, a virus from another solar system invades Earth.

The Secret of Lizard Woman

ABC, Saturday, June 7 and Saturday, June 14, check local listings for time. This two-part movie is a coming-of-age tale featuring a 13-year-old Native American, who spends the summer with his uncle on a Navajo reservation. For support materials produced by KIDSNET, call 800/647-4ABC.

These listings were provided by KIDSNET, a computerized clearinghouse for children's electronic media.

School Stories

What's really happening in school classrooms today? Tune in to *School Stories*, produced by the National Education Association and The Learning Channel, and find out. Here's the schedule:

Plugging into Technology

Sunday, May 4, 12:30 p.m., ET. With the help of a federal grant, a school in one of America's poorest counties joined the technology revolution five years ago. Take a look at the students from White River South Dakota High School in South Dakota now. They've got their own home page, TV news program, and graphics program.

The Drive To Teach

Sunday, May 11, 12:30 p.m., ET. This program features an innovative professional development plan in Louisiana that helps education support personnel who want to teach pursue their education.

Class Act:

A Teacher Profile

Sunday, May 18, 12:30 p.m., ET. Spend some time with Rhode Island teacher Mary Lee Douin, who uses her singing and theatrical talent to fire up her students' passion for literature.

Second-Chance High

Sunday, May 25, 12:30 p.m., ET. What happens when you mix high school students who were expelled with kids who dropped out and older welfare recipients who are back in school? In Shreveport Louisiana, the answer is learning—the key is teaching to a variety of different learning styles.

Connecting with Kids

Sunday, June 8, 12:30 p.m., ET. Visit with two veteran teachers—Minnesota's Mary Beth Blegen and Texan John Furst—both known for getting the best from their students. Watch them as they work magic in their classrooms.

BONUS: As an added plus for NEA members, each episode of *School Stories* is available on video (after it airs) with an additional 15 to 20 minutes of tips from the educators featured. For details or to order, call 800/229-2400.

Heads Up

Free or Inexpensive

Civil Rights Pioneers

Take a personal look at the civil rights



movement through exchanges between students and civil rights pioneers in *Oh, Freedom! Kids Talk*

About the Civil Rights Movement with the People Who Made It Happen by Casey King and Linda Barrett Osborne. \$18 plus \$4 s&h. Accompanying teacher's guide on

request. For details, call 800/726-0600 or go to www.randomhouse.com.



Creepy Crawly Science

Teaching kids the scientific method can be a slimy, bug-infested, fun affair, according to author Sally Stenhouse Kneidel. In *Creepy Crawlies and the Scientific Method*, Kneidel offers more than 100 experiments for the home and classroom. \$17.95 plus s&h. Fulcrum Publishing, 350 Indiana St., Suite 350, Golden, CO 80401-5093, 800/992-2908.



Kids and Inventions

Calling all student inventors. *Put a Fan in Your Hat! Inventions, Contraptions, & Gadgets Kids Can Build* by Robert Carrow offers a variety of clever contraptions made for young minds. \$14.95 plus \$4.50 s&h. McGraw-Hill Order Services, P.O. Box 545, Blacklick, OH 43004-0545.



Controversial Issues

A new book from Phi Delta Kappa International, *Hot Buttons: Unraveling 10 Controversial Issues in Education*, edited by Donovan Walling, includes essays on 10 hot issues, including accountability, inclusion, and charter schools. \$17 plus \$3 s&h. Phi Delta Kappa International, 800/766-1156.



Countering Conflict

In *New Faces in Our Schools: Student-generated Solutions to Ethnic Conflict*, eight recent immigrant teenagers offer their stories and their perceptions of one another. \$20 plus \$4.50 s&h. Many Cultures Publishing, P.O. Box 425646, San Francisco, CA 94142-5646. To order, call 888/281-3757. California buyers must add appropriate sales tax.

Tackling Gay Issues

It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in the Classroom—a new film by Academy Award winners Debra Chasnoff and Helen Cohen—shows what happens when teachers address lesbian and gay issues in appropriate ways and counter anti-gay bias in the

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MBNT0597

Heads Up

classroom. Contact Women's Educational Media, 415/641-4616.



Fighting Drug Abuse

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention offers a kit full of free materials to educate kids about the dangers of

marijuana use. For more information, contact the Reality Check Campaign, 11426 Rockville Pike, Suite 100, Rockville, MD 20852, 800/729-6686.

Photo Finish

In the "50 Free Things" cover story (February), you may have read about Kodak's Using Cameras in the Curriculum. Although this program is free, it's only available to Kodak retailers, who then work with local educators. Because of the overwhelming demand from the story and limited funds, the program has reached its limit for the school year.

Announcements

NEA Issues Conference

Want to know more about block scheduling? Interested in National Board certification or charter schools?

Find out about these hot topics and many more at NEA's Instructional

Issues Conference, held just before the NEA Representative Assembly on June 30 at the Atlanta Hilton.

Registration: \$25 until May 31, \$30 thereafter. Non-members, add \$5. For registration materials, call 800/486-0667. For details, contact the NEA National Center for Innovation at 202/822-7350.

Awards

Family Literacy

The National Center for Family Literacy recently named Karen Klimat-Thomas, an NEA member and early childhood education teacher at Lowell School in Mesa, Arizona, its 1996 Toyota Family Literacy Teacher of the Year.

For more information about the award, contact the National Center for Family Literacy, Waterfront Plaza 325 W. Main St., Louisville, KY 40202, 502/584-1133.

Be Your Best

The Education Excellence Foundation of the National School Supply and Equipment Association will award 20 \$500 *Be Your Best!* scholarships to teachers for professional development activities. Deadline: June 30. Scholarships must be used during the 1997-98 school year. For more information, call 800/595-5550.

Web Winners

Climbing Mt. Everest



At press-time, NEA member Jason Edwards was leaving for Katmandu, Nepal to lead an expedition to Mt. Everest, the highest peak in the world. For a fee, you can follow his progress on a Web site—www.vrsystems.com/everest—designed by VR Didatech.

Science Magazine

Now there's an electronic science magazine that's full of resources and lesson plans for busy teachers. Check it out at www.cais.com/publish.

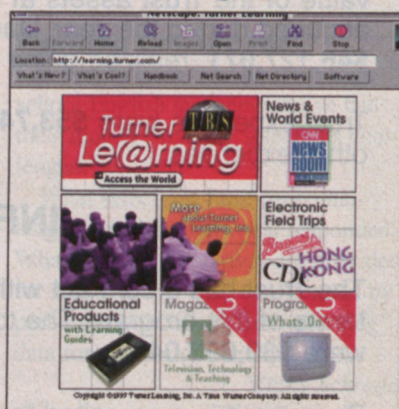
Find a Friend

Looking for a school in another city? Here's a Web site that will give you a map with its location and some details about it. The site lists some 107,000 schools. You can check it out at www.asd.com.

Ask An Astronaut

This site by the National Space Society features astronaut profiles and answers questions like, "How can I become an astronaut?" or "What's it like to fly a space shuttle?" Check it out at www.nss.org/askastro/.

Turner Learning



Want to know the latest from the CNN newsroom? Tap into the Turner Learning Network—www.learning.turner.com or www.turner.com/tes/—for curriculum materials and resources.

Teacher Resources

For education resources, links, and Web site reviews, take a look at American Fidelity's Education World Web site—www.education-world.com. Also available: employment listings and a database of school projects.

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Get free facts on starting your own home-based business!



Sheralyn Pearson

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NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST PLAN

1995 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

(Trust Plan Year Beginning September 1, 1995)

The following is the summary annual report for the NEA Members Insurance Trust Plan, Employer Identification Number 52-1126682, including information for NEA Life Insurance Program, NEA Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance Program, NEA DUES-TAB®, and NEA MemberCare® Medicare Supplement Program for period beginning September 1, 1995 and ending August 31, 1996. The annual report has been filed with the Internal Revenue Service, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

BASIC NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The value of Trust assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Trust was **\$80,860,600** as of August 31, 1996, compared to **\$80,742,773** as of September 1, 1995. During the Trust year, the Trust experienced an increase in its net assets of **\$6,117,827**. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of Trust assets; that is, the difference between the value of the Trust assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the Trust year, the Trust had a total income of **\$59,867,013** including participant contributions of **\$46,127,071**, realized gains of **\$9,943,262** from the sale of assets, and earnings from investments of **\$5,738,489**.

Trust expenses were **\$53,749,186**. These expenses included benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries, administrative and other expenses.

INFORMATION FOR NEA LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all Life Insurance claims incurred under the terms of this program. The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 1995, and ending August 31, 1996, were **\$30,653,040**.

Because it is a so called "experienced-rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 1996, the contributions made under such "experienced-rated" contract were **\$30,653,040** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **\$27,433,129**.

INFORMATION FOR NEA ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT (AD&D) PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all AD&D claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The total contributions for the Trust year beginning September 1, 1995 and ending August 31, 1996 were **\$1,893,195**.

Because it is a so called "experienced-rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 1996, the contributions made under such "experienced-rated" contract were **\$1,893,195** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **\$1,498,155**.

INFORMATION FOR NEA DUES-TAB PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA DUES-TAB claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The total contributions for the Trust year beginning September 1, 1995, and ending August 31, 1996, were **\$2,191,436**.

Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 1996 the contributions made were **\$2,191,436** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **\$1,963,301**. Benefits charged, less benefit claims paid, were **(\$23,862)** which is comprised of incurred but unreported claims and a pooled claim charge. Trust expenses, less benefit claims paid, were **\$48,506** in premium taxes and **\$155,491** in other expenses.

The NEA DUES-TAB Program is self-supporting and paid by premiums from the NEA Members Insurance Trust funds rather than from Member contributions.

INFORMATION FOR NEA MEMBERCARE MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

This information will be distributed directly to NEA Membercare Medicare Supplement Program participants.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof for a reasonable charge or you may inspect the Annual Report without charge at the office of NEA Members Insurance Trust, c/o NEA Member Benefits, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036 or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. You also have the right to receive from the Trust Administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the Trust and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the Trust and accompanying notes, or both. The Administrator will state the charge, if any, of the specific document you request so you can find out the cost before ordering.

NEA Members Insurance Trust®

Heads Up



played on the packages.

A \$1,000 grant will be given to teachers who submit a student winner. Deadline: November 30.

For an entry kit, write to Crayola Colored Pencil Box Challenge, P.O. Box 3007, Colmar, PA 18915. For more information on the Web, take a look at www.crayola.com/art_education.

Contests

Crayola Artwork Contest

See your students' artwork on a Crayola Colored Pencil box!

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of Crayola pencils and to introduce the new 50-count box, the drawings of 10 students in grades 3-6 will be dis-

Science Inventions

Calling all creative minds. The Learning Triangle Press SciTech Invention Sweepstakes is on. The competition, open to inventors aged 10-16, features a \$500 prize for the top original invention. Deadline: continuous.

Participants may submit multiple entries. For more information, call 212/337-5045.

Member Exchange

Pop Tops

My fourth graders are collecting 11 million pop top tabs off of soda cans to create a "Pop Top Holocaust Memorial" that shows kids just how many people died. If you can send us pop tops, send me an E-mail message.

Kelly Green

Las Vegas, Nevada
caliban@mclv.net

Classroom Management

I'm looking for an excellent grade program to help me with classroom management. It should be sophisticated enough to print individual as well as class reports. I would like a recommendation for Windows 95.

Stephany Breed

DeKalb, Illinois
StephanyBr@aol.com

Keyboarding

I've been searching for a software program I saw a number of years ago called "Keyboarding for One Hand." Anyone have a copy to share?

Foster Jones

San Mateo County, California

fjones@smcoe-ns.ed.co.
sanmateo.ca.us

Fighting Censorship

I'm interested in hearing from high school English teachers who've had their required reading selections challenged.

What selections have been challenged, and how have you responded? What, if any, alternatives are provided for students who may be offended by particular selections? I'm collecting data for a paper on the topic.

Kathy Schriefer

Erie, Pennsylvania
ImaKits@aol.com

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Teaching is a great profession and a great art. However, almost no attention is given to teaching in the interminable discussions of "education reform" throughout the United States. In an enduring classic, Jacques Barzun, himself a legendary teacher, explores the triumphs of fine teaching and the failures of poor teaching. Always his objective is at least to challenge and at best to correct "the chuckle-headed notion that many educators have about teaching." Barzun identifies the essential principles of good teaching. Then he remarks how these principles can best be applied to the teaching of classics, music, art, science, philosophy, history, logic, and life itself. Timeless in its significance and suggestiveness, *Teacher in America* makes for both instructive and inspiring reading for anyone truly interested in learning and, especially, in the teaching of learning.

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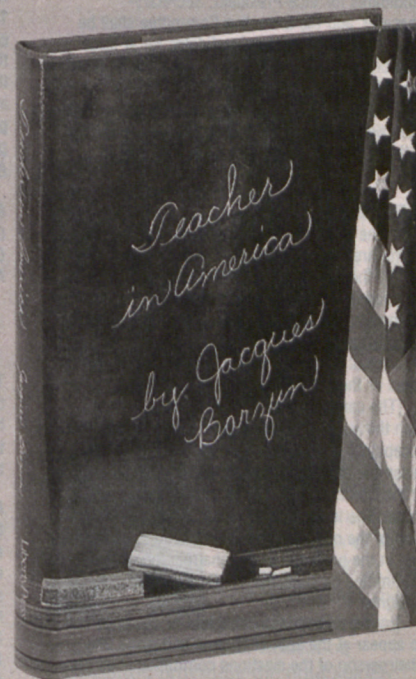
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Proposed Amendments

Proposed Amendments to the NEA Standing Rules, Constitution, and Bylaws, for Vote by the 1997 Representative Assembly

Below are all the proposed Amendments to the NEA Standing Rules, Constitution, and Bylaws that have been submitted in accordance with the NEA Constitution and Standing Rules.

Delegates to the 1997 NEA Representative Assembly, which will meet July 3-6 in Atlanta, Georgia, will vote on all these proposals.

Further information may be obtained from the NEA Governance and Policy Support office, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036 (telephone 202/822-7328).

In the following amendments, deletions are in brackets and additions are under-scored.

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 1 (Requires a majority vote)

TITLE: To establish, via a drawing April 1 of each year, an *NEA Alphabet* to determine nomination, speaking, and ballot order for all candidates for NEA office.

Rule 10. Elections, Committee and Procedure G. Nominations

1. (no changes)
2. Nominations for each category shall be made in an order determined by a drawing by the [candidates or their designees] Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules on or before April 1 of each year. All letters of the alphabet shall be placed in a container and drawn at random to determine an NEA Alphabet. In the event that the last names of two or more candidates begin with the same letter, the NEA Alphabet shall be applied to the second and, if necessary, successive letters of their last names until an order is established.

3. Consistent with the requirements set forth in Rule 10.H., each candidate shall be nominated from the floor by motion of a delegate who has full voting rights in the Representative Assembly. When all nominations have been made, each candidate or designee shall have an allotment of time to address the Representative Assembly. Candidates for the office of President shall be given five (5) minutes for this purpose. Candidates for Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and the Executive Committee shall be given three (3) minutes. Candidates for at-large positions on the Board of Directors shall be given two (2) minutes.

Candidates or their designees shall speak in an order determined by [a drawing by the candidates or their designees] the NEA Alphabet cited in 10.G.2.

H. Elections

1. The names of the candidates shall be placed on the first ballot in the order determined by [lottery by the candidates or their designees immediately following the close of nominations at the Representative Assembly] the alphabet sequence established in 10.G.2; on subsequent ballots the order shall be determined by [lottery by the candidates or their designees] the NEA Alphabet.

[The candidates or their designees, no later than thirty (30) minutes after the nomination and acceptance speeches have concluded, shall assemble at a place designated by the chairperson of the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules. The lottery shall be held under the supervision of the chairperson of the Elections Committee and in the presence of the chairperson of the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules or designee.]

[In the event that a candidate or designee fails to appear at the appointed time and place, the chairperson of the elections committee shall draw for that candidate.]

[The order of the lottery shall be as follows: For placement on the first ballot, the candidates shall draw in the order determined alphabetically by the states of the candidates. For placement on the runoff ballot, the candidates shall draw in order of the highest number of votes received on the previous ballot.]

Submitted in accordance with Standing Rule 9.D.1.a. (by petition of at least 50 delegates)
Contact Person: Karen Russell, California

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 2 (Requires a majority vote)

TITLE: To provide for notification by June 1 of at-large positions available on the NEA Board of Directors.

Rule 10. Elections, Committee and Procedure F. Certification of Election of NEA Director

On a form provided by the NEA, the president

of a state affiliate shall certify by May 20 the election of any director elected to assume office the following September 1. The president of a state affiliate shall certify the election of a person elected to complete an unexpired term on the NEA Board of Directors as soon as possible after such election. In the event the certifying officer is in fact the elected NEA Board member, the next ranking state officer shall certify the election report.

Prior to June 1, notification of the number and type of at-large positions necessary to fulfill the requirements of Article V, Section 1 of the NEA Constitution shall be sent to the executive officers, Executive Committee, Board of Directors, state presidents, state executive directors, members of the Minority Affairs Committee, and individuals who have notified NEA of intention to run for those positions.

Submitted in accordance with Standing Rule 9.D.1.d. (by a majority vote of the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules)
Contact Person: Christine Turner, Chairperson
NEA Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules Committee

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 3 (Requires a majority vote)

TITLE: To change the methods of reporting election results to the Representative Assembly.

Rule 10. Elections, Committee and Procedure H. Elections

12. [Immediately] E[following the oral report of elections results to the Representative Assembly, the [official count.] certified results [the names of those elected and the results of any other balloting] shall be posted at the voting booths] displayed electronically to the Assembly hall and printed in the next edition of the Representative Assembly newspaper.

Submitted in accordance with Standing Rule 9.D.1.d. (by a majority vote of the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules)
Contact Person: Christine Turner, Chairperson
NEA Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules Committee

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT 1 (Requires a 2/3 vote)

TITLE: To add "educational employees position" to the list of conditions on which basis NEA is prohibited from denying membership to anyone and to specify that NEA cannot deny rights on this basis.

Article II. Representative Assembly Section 2. Membership Eligibility: Provisions and Limitations

d. The Association shall not deny membership or rights to individuals on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, handicap, marital status, education employ-ees position, or economic status, nor shall any organization which so denies membership be affiliated with the Association.

Submitted in accordance with the Constitution, Article IX, Section 1.c. (by at least two state delegations in the Representative Assembly)
Contact person: Cheryl Sarvis, Georgia

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT 2 (Requires a 2/3 vote)

TITLE: To reduce from seventy-five (75) to sixty (60) the minimum required percent of classroom teachers on all NEA committees except the Advisory Committee of Student members.

Article III. Representative Assembly Section 6. Committees

All appointive bodies of the Association except the Review Board shall be designated by the term *committee*. A Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules shall be established by the Representative Assembly. All other committees

shall be established or discontinued as provided in the Bylaws. All committees except the advisory Committee of Student Members shall comprise at least [seventy-five (75)] sixty (60) percent classroom teachers. There shall be a minimum of twenty (20) percent ethnic-minority representation on each committee.

Submitted in accordance with the Constitution, Article IX, Section 1.b. (by petition of at least 50 delegates)
Contact person: Marge Rosenthal, Wisconsin

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT 3 (Requires a 2/3 vote)

TITLE: To provide that in every even-numbered year, a budget for two fiscal years would be proposed by the Board of Directors to the Representative Assembly.

Article III. Representative Assembly Section 7. Functions

c. Adopt the [annual] budget;

Bylaw 5. Board of Directors 5-9. Fiscal Powers

In even-numbered years [T]he Board shall propose [the] a budget for two (2) fiscal years to the Representative Assembly. The Board shall discharge such other fiscal responsibilities as the Representative Assembly may delegate to it.

Bylaw 11. General Finance

11-7. Committee on Program and Budget

The Committee on Program and Budget shall comprise seven (7) members whose function shall be to prepare with the President, the Secretary-Treasurer, and the Executive Director the [annual] biennial budget. The Vice-President and the Secretary-Treasurer shall be members during their terms of office. The Board of Directors shall elect at its first meeting following September 1 five (5) of its members for staggered two (2) year terms. Members from ethnic minorities shall comprise at least twenty (20) percent of the committee. The Board shall elect additional members as appropriate to assure such ethnic-minority representation. A member elected by the Board of Directors shall serve only while a member of the Board. The Secretary-Treasurer shall serve as chairperson.

11-9. Budget

a. The budget of the Association shall be designed to achieve the goals and objectives of the Association.

b. The President, with the Secretary-Treasurer, the Executive Director, and the Committee on Program and Budget, shall prepare the proposed budget for presentation to the Executive Committee for review prior to its transmittal to the Board of Directors. In even-numbered years [T]he budget shall be recommended to the Board of Directors at least forty-five (45) days prior to the Annual Meeting. After reviewing and tentatively approving the budget, the Board shall direct its printing. The budget shall then be transmitted not later than thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting to the presidents of state and local affiliates and to others as determined by the Board of Directors. The Committee on Program and Budget shall hold at least one (1) open hearing on the proposed budget at the Annual Meeting. The delegates may give input and make recommendations to the committee for changes in the proposed budget. The Committee on Program and Budget shall meet following the hearings to consider any change which it may wish to make prior to final action by the Board of Directors. Following such open hearings, the Board shall meet to approve the budget for transmittal to the Representative Assembly.

c. The budget shall include an appropriation for contingencies of no less than one million dollars (\$1 million) and no more than one (1) percent of the budget.

NEA COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND RULES

CHRISTINE N. TURNER,
Chairperson, Washington

STAN R. BRYANT
Oklahoma

MARLENE R. BURKE
Vermont

RICK HARRIS
Florida

ELAINE SUDDUTH
South Carolina

d. Financial participation by the Association in activities of Special Interest Groups shall be limited to funds for projects or for short-term, special program contracts authorized in the budget.

a. In the second year of a biennial budget, adjustments as deemed necessary shall be recommended by the Board of Directors at a meeting held at least forty-five (45) days prior to the Annual Meeting and reported to the Representative Assembly. The RA will receive and act on the modifications recommended by the Board of Directors.

Submitted in accordance with the Constitution, Article IX, Section 1.d. (by majority vote of the NEA Board of Directors)
Contact: NEA Board of Directors

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT 4 (Requires a 2/3 vote)

TITLE: To eliminate the current cap on the number of administrators/supervisors permitted to serve on the Board of Directors.

Article V. Board of Directors Section 1. Composition

a. At least one (1) director elected within each state shall be a nonsupervisor, and if a state is entitled to more than one (1) director, at least one (1) shall be a classroom teacher. The total number of additional directors representing the members in each state affiliate after the first shall be on the basis of [proportional] representation by educational position of NEA members.

(no changes to b. and c.)

d. Administrators shall be represented on the Board at least in proportion to their membership in the Association. If the percentage of administrators elected to the Board of Directors fails to achieve proportional representation, the Representative Assembly shall elect at large the number required to assure such representation. Candidates for these positions shall be nominated by the delegates at the Representative Assembly who are administrators.

Submitted in accordance with the Constitution, Article IX, Section 1.c. (by at least two state delegations in the Representative Assembly)
Contact person: Cheryl Sarvis, Georgia

BYLAW AMENDMENT 5 (Requires a majority vote)

TITLE: To allow retired staff members of NEA and state affiliates to become eligible to join NEA-Retired.

Bylaw 2. Membership 2-1. Categories

d. Retired membership shall be open to any person who is at least forty-five (45) years of age or who is eligible to receive a pension from an educational employment retirement system (including Social Security), and who was employed for at least five (5) years in a position that qualified him or her for Active or Staff membership but who is no longer so employed. Retired membership is limited to persons who support the purposes and programs of the Association. Retired members shall maintain membership in the state affiliate provided the affiliate has a membership category for retired members and provided the affiliate grants such members at least the right to serve as delegate to its delegate assembly or equivalent body and to be counted toward the representation entitlement for such body.

Retired members shall have the right to vote, to hold elective or appointive positions in the Association, and to be counted toward the representation entitlement for the Board of Directors and the Representative Assembly as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws.

Retired members shall be eligible to receive benefits and services of the Association authorized by the Board of Directors.

Submitted in accordance with the Constitution,

Article IX, Section 1.a. (by petition of at least 100 Active members from two or more states.)
Contact person: Marian Conrad, Nevada

BYLAW AMENDMENT 6 (Requires a majority vote)

PROPOSED TITLE: To allow the affiliation of a dual-national state affiliate.

Bylaw 2. Membership 2-7. Membership Dues

(New) n. Members of a dual-national state affiliate shall maintain membership in the Association and the American Federation of Teachers where eligible, and the total combined national dues that such members pay shall be not less than the Association dues for members in the relevant job category. If a member of a dual-national state affiliate is a member of the Association and the American Federation of Teachers, said member's total combined national dues shall be apportioned between the Association and the American Federation of Teachers in a manner that is agreed to by the two organizations. The Executive Committee is authorized to agree on behalf of the Association to the manner of apportionment of the total combined national dues, and such an agreement shall be a precondition to the Association's affiliation of the dual-national state affiliate. If a member of the dual-national state affiliate is a member of the Association but is not eligible for membership in the American Federation of Teachers, the Association shall receive the full amount of said member's national dues. The provisions of this Bylaw 2-7.n. shall take precedence over anything to the contrary in Bylaw 2-7.a. through l.

Bylaw 8. Affiliates and Special Interest Groups 8-3. Governance Affiliates

(New) d. An organization shall not be eligible for Association affiliation as a dual-national state affiliate unless

1. The organization is from a state in which at least ten percent (10%) of the Association members are in dual-national local affiliates, or
2. The organization is from a state in which the Association membership and the American Federation of Teachers membership is competitive (i.e. neither organization has more than 85% of their combined membership); and
3. The creation of the organization has been

approved by at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors and the Representative Assembly (or equivalent governing bodies) of the pre-existing state affiliate of the Association that was a predecessor of the organization seeking to be a dual-national state affiliate.

8-11. Standards for State Affiliates

The Association shall not affiliate a state association, including a dual-national state affiliate, unless it meets the following minimum standards: (no further changes to this section)

Bylaw 12. Definitions

12-1. Definitions of Terms

a. State affiliate:

(i) State affiliate shall mean the association within each state or commonwealth and associations representing the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the [Overseas] Federal Education Association, and such other comparable associations which meet at least the minimum standards of affiliation.

(ii) Dual-national state affiliate: Dual-national state affiliate shall mean a state affiliate of the Association that also is a state affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers.

Submitted in accordance with the Constitution, Article IX, Section 1.a. (by petition of at least 100 Active members from two or more states.)
Contact person: Judy Schaubach, Minnesota

BYLAW AMENDMENT 7 (Requires a majority vote)

TITLE: To eliminate requirements in all-inclusive states and locals for proportional representation by educational position for delegations to the Representative Assembly and on state and local governance bodies.

Bylaw 3. Representative Assembly 3-1. Allocation of Delegates

a. Allocation of delegate credentials to state and local affiliates shall be on the basis of Active membership in the Association as of January 15 of the calendar year in which the Representative Assembly convenes.

Representation from state and local affiliates which provide all-inclusive membership shall be on the basis of [proportional] representation by education position. Representation from state and local affiliates which include in their membership

more than one (1) of the three (3) job categories eligible for Association Active membership (i.e., nonsupervisory active members in prekindergarten through secondary instructional positions, educational support positions, or higher education faculty positions) may, at the option of the state and local affiliates, be on the basis of proportional representation by job category. A delegate elected to represent an affiliate shall be a member of that affiliate, provided that if additional delegate positions are allocated to a state affiliate on the basis of Active members of the association within a state who are not also members of the state affiliate, only the latter members of the association may be elected to such additional delegate positions.

Bylaw 8. Affiliates and Special Interest Groups 8-7. Standards for Local Affiliates

a. Each affiliate shall apply the one-person-one-vote principle for representation on its governing bodies except that (i) the affiliate shall take such steps as are legally permissible to achieve ethnic-minority representation at least proportionate to its ethnic-minority membership and (ii) the affiliate may adopt a provision in its governing documents that would permit that local to allocate a minimum of one (1) representative or delegate to members at each work site of a school district or higher educational institution within the jurisdiction of the affiliate.

Where an all-inclusive affiliate exists, it shall provide [proportionate] representation between its non-supervisor members and its supervisor members.

8-11. Standards for State Affiliates

a. Each affiliate shall apply the one-person-one-vote principle for representation on its governing bodies except that the affiliate shall take such steps as are legally permissible to achieve ethnic-minority representation at least proportionate to its ethnic-minority membership.

A state delegate body may adopt a provision to the governing documents of the state affiliate that would permit that state to allocate a minimum of one delegate credential to each local affiliate.

Where an all-inclusive affiliate exists, it shall provide [proportionate] representation between its non-supervisor members and its supervisor members.

The state affiliate shall designate at least one of its NEA state directors to serve on the board of directors (or equivalent governing body) of the state affiliate with full rights of participation.

Submitted in accordance with the Constitution,

Article IX, Section 1.c. (by at least two state delegations in the Representative Assembly)
Contact person: Cheryl Sarvis, Georgia

BYLAW AMENDMENT 8 (Requires a majority vote)

TITLE: To create a new section in Bylaw 11 (General Finance) entitled *Budget Restrictions* requiring the Secretary-Treasurer to ensure to the NEA membership that no General Fund monies are funneled to abortion lobbying activities.

Bylaw 11. General Finance (New) Section 11-13.

The Secretary-Treasurer shall ensure to the NEA membership that no General Fund monies are funneled to abortion lobbying activities.

Submitted in accordance with the Constitution, Article IX, Section 1.b. (by petition of at least 50 delegates)

Contact person: Christine Nowak, New York

BYLAW AMENDMENT 9 (Requires a majority vote)

TITLE: To require the Secretary-Treasurer to report to chairpersons of NEA Special Interest Caucuses about expenditures associated with activities of interest to the different caucuses.

Bylaw 11. General Finance (New) Section 15.

The Secretary-Treasurer shall publish a quarterly report for chairpersons of all registered NEA Special Interest Caucuses of expenditures associated with activities of interest to the different caucuses.

Submitted in accordance with the Constitution, Article IX, Section 1.b. (by petition of at least 50 delegates)

Contact person: Ed Weber, Ohio

Get the Proceedings

If you're a life member of NEA and want to know the details about what went on at the 1996 NEA Representative Assembly, sit right down and write.

Clip the label from the front of your copy of NEA Today and send it with your request to NEA Membership Records, Attn: 1996 RA Proceedings, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

*Not yet approved at press time by the NEA Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules

RA Delegates To Elect Leaders

Delegates to the 1997 Representative Assembly July 3-6 in Atlanta, Georgia, will elect an NEA Secretary-Treasurer, and two members of the NEA Executive Committee. All three officers will serve three-year terms beginning September 1, 1997.

The following candidates filed for office and submitted statements by April 1. Candidates for each office appear in the order in which they filed for office.

FOR SECRETARY-TREASURER



Dennis Van Roekel
Now is the time of opportunities. To restore confidence in public education, we must build a broader constituency in support of public education.

We must reawaken a national recognition of and appreciation for the value of education to our society's domestic and economic future. We must take the lead in defining the future of education reform or be relegated to spectator status in our own profession. It is up to us to assume the leadership and take the action necessary to move public education into the next century.

I have confidence in our ability, together, to advocate for public education, expand the rights for educational employees, and advocate for human and civil rights. Together, we will make our dreams of today tomorrow's reality.

Kathy Bell

The next few years are crucial ones for



both public education and our Association. Our public schools have been under attack and, in many cases, the NEA has taken the blame for their failure. It is up

to us to "restore public confidence in public education." We can do this by admitting where we have failed, emphasizing our successes and forming coalitions to increase public awareness of what we do, what we need, and where we want to go. We must do this by emphasizing that EQUITY and EXCELLENCE go hand in hand, that EDUCATIONAL REFORM and COLLECTIVE BARGAINING are not opposites and that the NEA is in the forefront of moving our schools into the 21st century.

FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (TWO SEATS)

Marilyn Cross

As education employees in the 1990s,



we are faced with the constant challenge of the public's perception of public education and the resulting struggle for school funding.

To succeed in our goal of educating all children, we must confront these issues squarely and proactively. We must focus our attention and our energy on promoting the successes of public schools, enlisting parents, and government officials to join us, unified in direction as well as action, as we fortify and enhance public education. Through this unity we shall maintain the strengths we have achieved and eliminate the adversaries of public education.

As a strong and united NEA, we must maintain our course, now and in the future, in the battle for the survival of public education.



Dan Sakota

The National Education Association has set its sight on restoring public confidence in public education.

Although sometimes the criticism may seem too harsh and the obstacles too great, we cannot concede the challenge or compromise our beliefs. We must reestablish, for our members as well as the general public, confidence in our public education system.

Those of us in public education often

face obstacles and little support. However, wonderful learning opportunities are offered to students each day in the classrooms across this country. Education personnel deserve recognition. They deserve support. They deserve respect.

The NEA must not be afraid of taking the risks. We must continue to strive for excellence, and we must continue to be caring for each other.



Iona Holloway

We, as Americans, have an obligation to prepare our students for challenges of the 21st century. That can best be accomplished through our public

schools and a National Education Association providing the bold leadership necessary to ensure it.

During my 20 years as a paraprofessional and Association activist at all levels, I have been proud to be a part of an organization that strenuously advocates for its members but never loses sight of why we're really here — the education of our students.

The NEA must continue to speak with a strong voice for its members and the children they are preparing for an ever-changing world. A call for better working conditions and increased member rights comes with it a responsibility to be part of a process that demands excellence from all who touch our students' lives.

MENT0597



In the Light Lane

How Do You Spell Dog?

When I gave my eighth grade students a quiz to see if they were grasping the main concepts of our lessons on the U.S. Constitution, some of their answers were quite amusing.

"Who is the head of the House of Representatives?"

Answers: Newt Gingrishage, Noot Gegrige, Nut Gingarage, Newt Lengweit.

"Who is the head of the Senate?"

Answers: All Gore, George Washington, Hillary Clinton.

"What's the President's title in regard to the military?"

Answers: #1 Chef, Commander in Cheep, Commander and thief.

"Why is it called the Supreme Law of the Land?"

Answer: Because all judges in the U.S. respect the Constipation.

Sue Langan
Whittier, California

On the last day of school, one of my third graders presented me with a beautifully wrapped package.

The students were anxious to see the gift, so they gathered around me as I opened the box. It contained a jar of face cream.

I thanked the student and said, "I believe Lesa wants to make me pretty, but I'm not sure this is enough."

One of the boys quite innocently added, "Oh, Mrs. Robert, it would take a lot!"

Eunice Robert
Pocahontas, Arkansas

We were working on contractions in our first grade class. Eddie proudly got up to spell "can't": "C-A-N-suppository-T."

Paula Freilich
Ardmore, Pennsylvania

In social studies, we'd come to the chapter on Abraham Lincoln. As we got ready to read the section on his move from Kentucky to Pigeon Creek, I drew attention to the picture and asked my students to identify the items that family members were taking with them.

A kettle, bedrolls, and axes were picked out. Then I pointed to the spinning wheel. The class seemed mysti-

fied—until one student confidently called out, "Exercise bike."

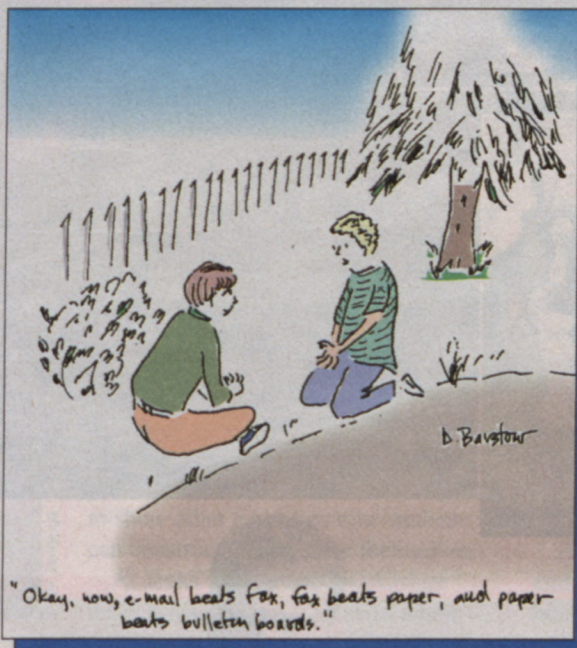
Jo Stull
Pleasant Hill, Ohio

Every year, each classroom receives a set of practice tests to familiarize students with the format for the Connecticut Master Test.

On the sixth grade version, the children were asked to draw and label an "acute angle."

As I monitored my class, I noted that one young man had carefully drawn a chubby, cheery cherub and aptly labeled it, "A cute angel."

Mary Jo Scott
Mansfield, Connecticut



"Okay, now, e-mail beats fax, fax beats paper, and paper beats bulletin boards."

At the beginning of first grade, we assess students who might be eligible to receive Title I Reading help. One part of the assessment involves having them write all the words they know how to spell.

Usually, after writing their name and maybe a couple of more words, they are stumped. So we prompt them.

One little girl wrote "cat," so I asked her if she could spell "dog."

"Sure," she said with a big smile. "B-I-N-G-O."

Pat Manor
Howell, Michigan

Being a second grade teacher requires skillful deciphering. When Andrew handed me an envelope marked "The Night Away," with a dollar inside, I was momentarily

stumped. The only things we were collecting money for that week were book orders and the United Way. . . .

Then it hit me. Andrew wanted to contribute to people less fortunate than he. But I'd never clearly defined the name "United Way." "The Night Away" was his translation.

Carolyn Rice
Middlefield, Ohio

One day, I was telling students in my second grade ESL class that I was tired and yawning because the neighbor's dog had barked all night. Then we all practiced yawning and barking.

The discussion then moved on to other night sounds: cats fighting, police sirens, dripping faucets. One very serious child then said that the lions keep him awake. So we practiced roaring.

Then I, in my misguided sense that adults know everything, told him that he probably heard cars going by. He was determined that they were lions.

When this student's family picked him up after school, I mentioned the conversation about lions. And his father said yes, the lions did keep them awake—they lived next door to Milinda, first lady of magic, and her lions, camels, etc.

Only in Las Vegas!

Karon Lee
Las Vegas, Nevada

After my second graders had just completed graphing their birthdays on a chart, one little girl came to me and admitted, "My birthday really isn't in May, Mrs. Reimann. It's in Logan."

Betty Reimann
Boise, Idaho

Last year, on my last day of student teaching in a resource room, I handed out candy bars to the students and thanked them for their attention.

One of the students thanked me in return, and then said, "So, what are you going to be now?"

Cheryl Benson
Sigourney, Iowa

By Definition

A short video that I showed my junior level college prep class noted that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's second wife died when her light summer dress caught fire after hot sealing wax dripped on it.

When the clip ended, one of my students asked, "That was an awful way to die—but why did they have hot wax on the ceiling?"

Brenda Abbott
Bailey, Colorado

My students were assigned to write a sentence using their new vocabulary words. For the word "hinge," one student wrote, "I went to the biggest hinge in town."

The definition that I'd given them? "Hinge: a swinging joint."

Carol Hoover
Norcross, Georgia

After researching election issues earlier this school year, one of my language arts students reported on a lobbyist taking "potshots" at Congress.

Then he assured me that he'd never use drugs—because he wouldn't ever want to take pot shots in the future!

Carol Fredrikson
Two Rivers, Wisconsin

As I worked at my computer, a kindergarten girl popped in and asked, "Whatcha doing?"

"Typing a letter," I replied.

"Oh," she said, "is it 'A'?"

Michael Nichols
Jackson County, North Carolina

Got Laughs?

Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share? You can send contributions to "In the Light Lane," *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Fax: 202/822-7206 E-mail: NEAToday@aol.com

Or post your story in the "Recess" area of NEA's Web site (<http://www.nea.org>) or in the "Humor" topic on the NEA Teaching & Learning Message Board (keyword: NEA Teaching) on America Online.

People

Masterpiece Theater

When fine arts teacher **Russell Hoffman** journeyed to Europe last summer for the first time, he was enchanted by the vivid hues of the south of France and mesmerized by the artistry in Florence.

"We strapped on a backpack for 21 days, and we saw where it all started," says Hoffman. "I'd waited a long time, but what an artistic feast."

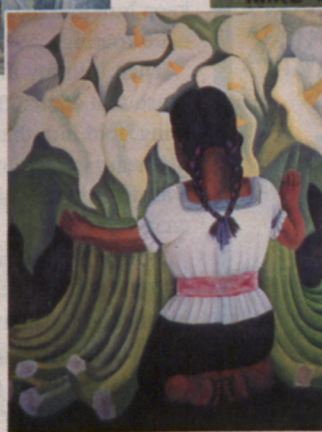
Hoffman's long-anticipated sojourn allowed him to see firsthand the masterpieces that he'd been teaching his students to re-create.

Boasting great works from Chagall to da Vinci, the walls of Blach Middle School in Los Gatos, California have become galleries of such high quality that even the Smithsonian has taken note.

Hoffman added music to his visual art instruction a few years ago, then notes that a student told him, "This is lame without a literary leg."

So now, as students enter Hoffman's classroom, they're asked to transform themselves into three great artists chosen from visual, musical, and literary art.

Yet it's the vibrant paintings that attract the most attention. Referred to en masse as the Blach Gallery, the artwork is now open to public viewing all day on weekends and after 3 p.m. on school days.



Scott Buschman

Yea to Neigh

Michael and Denise Reeser are two of the lucky few who can horse around at work and at home.

The newlyweds are both first-year teachers at Minnesota's Brainerd High School Farm.

After a day of introducing students to the intricacies of farm life, they go home to their 40-acre hobby farm to begin the daily chores.

Located in Brainerd, a quarter mile from the Mississippi River, the small-scale farm is home to the Reesers, their two cats, three dogs, and two Arabian horses.

As they attend to all the feeding and cleaning, the Reesers contemplate the future projects they've got in mind.

"We plan to put up new fencing and build a riding arena for Denise to teach children how to ride horses," says Michael.

Denise developed a love for animals early in life, partly because her family ran a hog, crop, and horse operation in New Prague. This spurred her to pursue a degree in agricultural education.

And after student teaching, "I knew I wanted to be a teacher," she says.

Michael, too, has a degree in agricultural education, which he's put to good use.

"I learn as much as the students every day," says Michael. "They really keep you on your toes, because they constantly challenge you with questions."



Steve Kohls

1997 Teacher of the Year Finalists



Breck Smith

Getting Down to Business

Kentucky teacher **Rosalind Hurley Richards** once left teaching and achieved great success in corporate America as a financial analyst.

Yet "the calling to come back to teaching was strong," says Hurley Richards, and she returned to the classroom in 1994.

Still, vestiges of her business career are evident.

Framed art and wooden carvings accentuate the professional atmosphere she tries to create in her fifth grade classroom at Squires Elementary in Lexington.

And her business career has brought

added depth to her teaching.

"My experience as a corporate manager taught me that our children need to be critical thinkers and good analysts," says Hurley Richards. "And they need to know there can be more than one solution."

Hurley Richards introduces her students to the value of risk-taking and teaches them not to fear failure.

"Children are too afraid of failure. A lot of learning comes from failure," says Hurley Richardson. "They can't always expect to hit a home run."

"But kids are ready for instant gratification. I try to teach them that there

is pleasure in the sweat from learning," she adds. "You don't get a reward every time."

Proverbs and folktales from different cultures pepper her classes, "teaching students what it is to be wise and clever, words people rarely use anymore," she says.

Hurley Richardson strives to instill values that will inspire her students to learn well throughout their life.

"The need to teach the value of lifelong learning is driven by the rapid changes in society," notes Hurley Richards. "We need to prepare children for their future, not our past."



Steve Jennings

Cultivating a New Equation

In his Granny Ab's garden, **George Abshire** was lovingly taught how to plant the town's most valuable commodities, cucumbers and onions.

Now he's planting valuable seeds of his own in the fertile plain of his Jenks, Oklahoma math class.

But Abshire's shaking up the field. "Students need to make sense of math before they start pluggin' and chugin'," he says. "I conduct workshops to show other educators how students can construct meaning for themselves."

At Jenks Middle School, Abshire teaches his students—some of whom

he regards as "great, great thinkers"—how to compile stock portfolios and spreadsheets. In travels to other classrooms, he's shown a social studies class studying Africa how to compare the areas of different countries and how to use geoboards.

Yet "the business of education is not just limited to these four walls," Abshire emphasizes. "I've got to reach out to the community, and the community has also got to help us."

Abshire has taken the first step, embracing projects like tutoring in housing projects.

Abshire's main inspiration for community involvement has been his daughter, Kallista, who lost her battle with leukemia a few years ago.

"Though painful memories made it difficult," says Abshire, "I've been able to involve my classes with several service learning projects, too," including a recycling project to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House.

"Kallista was a gardener," Abshire notes. "One tiny sunflower seed she planted grew to be taller than she. The best seeds that Kallista planted are the ones that are now growing in me."



Greg Brown

Ignoring Stop Signs

On January 20, 1964, **Jan Mitchell** started teaching. Five months later, one thought consumed her: stopping.

"I didn't feel I was making a difference," recalls the Iowa teacher. "I'd robotically give out assignments, but I wasn't fostering any real growth."

Now Mitchell is so enamored of her career that, during her summer break, she actually writes poetry about her students. "Otherwise, I miss them terribly," she laughs.

Wouldn't the Jan Mitchell of 33 years ago have scoffed at such sentiments?

"I had the wisdom to try again," she says simply. Though disheartened and frustrated with teaching, Mitchell retooled. "I thought, I'm going to try this again, and it's going to be better this time," she says.

Mitchell has applied this philosophy in her approach to her students. "I give them the chance to be who they want to be, and not who they have been," says the Marshalltown High communications teacher.

But Mitchell, who also teaches at-risk students, pushes her students beyond achieving merely academic success.

"I think the education process sim-

ply begins with teaching children to reach within themselves so they can learn," she says. "It ends when those same children then reach without and teach others."

These three NEA members are among four finalists for the 1997 National Teacher of the Year. This award is presented annually by the Council of Chief State School Officers and Scholastic magazine.

Money

Go Figure

When planning a vacation, think first about the experience you want—and second about economizing.

When NEA member Elizabeth Dedy decided to take a trip with her husband to Las Vegas this spring, she scanned air fares in the newspaper until she found a dirt-cheap price from Alaska Airlines.

When she booked rooms, she was willing to pay \$200 a night for the New York, New York hotel because she thought the unique experience would be worth it. But when that hotel was full, Dedy chose \$59 rooms at the Tropicana. She wasn't willing to pay \$200 a night for a ho-hum experience.

Here are some pointers to keep in mind when mulling over vacation plans:

- Do your homework. Write to the chamber of commerce or the state or county tourism bureau. And use browsers like InfoSeek or Yahoo to search the World Wide Web for information on destinations that you're considering, airlines, hotels, and car rentals.

- When inquiring about air fares, press for the best price with questions like "Is there any way to lower that fare? What if we spend Saturday night? Is it cheaper to travel on a Tuesday or some other day?"

- Bargain for a hotel room. Hotels quote what they call a "rack rate," which is their published rate for a room. You can almost always do better with comments like "That's too high for me. Do you have anything less expensive?"

- If you're hitting the road, get a trip planner for a driving vacation and plan your route carefully.

- When planning the itinerary, factor in some time to reflect. A vacation should be a time to dream dreams, to stretch your mind.

- Settle on a vacation spot that suits everyone. Even the experts have slipped on this one. Ginger Applegarth, a financial planner in Boston, insisted on taking her two teenagers to France for a month even though one didn't want to go. "Everyone had a miserable time," she says.

Decisions, Decisions

Planning That Big Vacation

Take some forethought, add a little realism, and soon ocean waves will be lapping at your toes.

NEA member Elizabeth Dedy takes her vacations seriously.

Over the years, she and her husband, Scott, have traveled to Hawaii twice, spent three weeks in England and Ireland, and a month in Europe. Over break this spring, the Deadys went to San Diego, Yuma, and Las Vegas.

Anyone willing to do a little research, plan ahead, and think about what kind of experience they want for themselves and their family can enjoy the same success Dedy has.

It's important to be realistic. Don't expect to take a "big" vacation every year. But do expect to have a good experience.

Dedy, a fifth grade teacher at Rock Creek Elementary School in Black Diamond, Washington, has managed all her travels by combining frugality with careful planning.

A few strategies that she's employed:

- The Deadys haven't taken their four boys on most of their big vacations. "These days families go to Hawaii together, or they all go on big ski trips," Dedy said. "We never did that."

- The Deadys have taken family vacations, of course. But these trips have been family experiences rather than family extravaganzas. When the Deadys camped in Canada and at Yellowstone, Dedy meticulously planned their meals and allotted just \$3 a day for a campsite.

- When the Deadys went to Ireland in search of Scott's family roots in 1981, they saved for 18 months. And then Dedy did plenty of research to find the best air fares and accommo-

dations. "We don't get the cheapest place," she says. "We look for the best experience."

- When Scott's mother died a couple of years ago at age 93, the Deadys set aside \$5,000 of his inheritance to take a month-long trip to Europe. "We actually ended up spending more than that," Dedy says. "But we had a wonderful time."

They did use their credit cards. "But we paid them off as soon as we got the bills," Dedy says. "You can't allow the bills to go on until the next year."

Vacations undeniably require spending a chunk of money. But "even from a financial point of view, vacations are important, in that they allow you to think about what's working and what's not," says Ginger Applegarth, a financial planner based in Boston and author of *The Money Diet*.

"People no longer make New Year's resolutions," notes Applegarth. "It seems the only time you have the real clarity to make life decisions now is when you're away from your work environment."

—Mary Rowland



From Europe to Yellowstone, Washington state teacher Elizabeth Dedy has shown her family a good time on vacation. The trick: focusing on the family experience, not extravagance.

Ellen Barner

Resources

- If national parks are on your agenda, seek out the *Guide to the National Park Areas* (both an Eastern state and a Western state version are available) by David and Kay Scott. The authors, a college professor and elementary school principal, respectively, spend their summers traveling through the parks in a Volkswagen bus. \$10.95 from Globe Pequot Press.

- "AAA Map 'n' Go," a software program, maps the best driving route, estimates driving times, and lists restaurants and points of interests. Around \$45 from DeLorme Mapping.

- "Arthur Frommer's Outspoken Encyclopedia of Travel" offers info on bargain tickets, travel tips, and daily travel news updates on the Web at www.mcp.com/frommers/.

Ready for Retirement?

Home for the Long Term

Private long-term care insurance could keep you out of a nursing home. But consider the options carefully.

Name: Bessie Woods

Age: 42

Job: Community-based instructor for moderate to severely handicapped children at North Pulaski High School in Jacksonville, Arkansas.

Home & Family:

Resides in Jacksonville with her husband, son, and two foster sons. She also has two daughters and recently became a grandmother.

Years Until Retirement:

At least 20

Current Challenge:

"What will happen when I can no longer take care of myself? I'd much rather have someone care for me in my home than go to a nursing home. But I'm afraid I won't be able to afford such care."

Options:

Most people prefer receiving care at home instead of in a nursing home. Unfortunately, welfare programs like Medicaid pay almost nothing for home care. Medicare and Medigap health insurance only cover limited skilled care and don't pay for custodial care—items like assistance with bathing and dressing—the most prevalent form of long-term care.

Private long-term care insurance pays for medical and personal care services, either in a nursing home or at home. Some policies include home care within a totally integrated policy, while others offer home care as a rider to a nursing home policy.

Before you decide which type of policy you want, think about whether you need home care coverage.

If you have a primary caregiver, such as a spouse, you could effectively use home care services several hours a week or take advantage of an adult day care center. Your family caregiver could provide assistance the rest of the time. Home care coverage would probably be worthwhile.

But if you don't have a caregiver, you may need all-day home care. This would be more expensive than a nursing home—and buying a policy with comprehensive home care benefits may not be a worthwhile investment.

If you decide to purchase long-term care insurance, buy only from a reputable, secure company. Consult A.M. Best or Standard and Poor's, references available in your local library, to check on a company's reliability. Narrow your choices to two or three good companies, then read their policies carefully.

A policy should pay if you need



Bessie Woods would prefer to receive care at home instead of in a nursing home in her later years. But she fears that the cost would be prohibitive.

Jeff Mitchell

long-term care due to physical or cognitive impairment. Medicare pays for skilled care at home and hospice care, so home care coverage should primarily cover personal services from home care aides and personal assistants. Adult day care should also be covered.

The policy should also include an inflation adjustment.

Long-term care insurance is expensive, and premiums increase with the age at which you buy a policy. If you want coverage, it may be best to buy it as soon

as you can afford it, rather than waiting until you need it.

Homework:

Contact the National Association for Home Care (202/547-7424) or the United Seniors Health Cooperative (202/393-6222) for publications on long-term care insurance and home care.

NEA Member Benefits offers the NEA MemberCare Long Term Care Program, insurance that provides NEA members and their families with long-term care benefits for nursing home and/or home health expenses. For information about the program—and on educational seminars in your area—call 800/884-2675 and ask to speak to a long-term care specialist.

Financial Finds

Estimating Life Insurance

How much life insurance do you need? To find out, visit the QuickQuote Insurance Agency's "Term Life Estimator" on the Internet (www.quickquote.com). Enter some general financial information, and the estimator instantly displays the amount of insurance you need. You can also call the QuickQuote Agency at 800/867-2404.

Saving for Retirement

The American Savings Education Council, which counts NEA as one of its partners, is working to raise public awareness on what it takes to ensure long-term financial independence. Its new brochure, "The Power to Choose," discusses the first steps to accomplishing just that. Write to ASEC, 2121 K St., N.W., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20036. Fax 202/775-6312. And for more tips, check out the Web at www.asec.org.

Rating Health Care

"The Consumers' Guide to Health Plans" tells you how to cut insurance costs, judge the quality of care, choose a good doctor, and how to get the best care your plan offers. It also includes ratings of 300 health plans, with details on how members rated those plans. \$12 from the Center for Study of Services, 733 15th St., N.W., Suite 820, Washington, DC 20005.

Where There's a Will

If you need a will but you don't want to pay an attorney to draw one up for you, consider writing your own. For guidance, consult the *Simple Will Book: How to Prepare a Legally Valid Will* (\$17.95) and "Willmaker 6" software (approximately \$40), both from Nolo Press.

Advice on Advisers

Want to know more about how to choose a broker before you turn over your hard-earned dollars? The Securities and Exchange Commission provides readable advice on the Web at www.sec.gov. The site also offers information on choosing mutual funds, avoiding investment fraud, and resolving disputes with stockbrokers. Want more reassurance? The Institute of Certified Financial Planners will provide a list of planners who are licensed. Call 800/282-7526.

Educated Investor

Q. Financial advice often reminds us to "factor in inflation." Is there a simple method to calculate future dollars for various inflation rates?

A. Yes. Multiply your current income by the following factor to see how much you would need to maintain the same standard of living:

Inflation	10 yrs	20 yrs	30 yrs
4 %	1.5x	2.2x	3.2x
5 %	1.6x	2.7x	4.3x
7 %	2.0x	3.9x	7.6x

Q. Are withdrawals from an individual retirement

account subject to Social Security tax?

A. No. Pension income from IRAs and qualified retirement plans is exempt from Social Security tax.

Have a question? Write to Educated Investor, NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Fax 202/822-7206. E-mail NEAToday@aol.com.

“...the
individual...
is absolutely
indispensable...”

Carl Jung, Psychoanalyst

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*Coverage amount depends on age of member

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Call 1-800-541-4119 to find out about NEA Medicare Supplement.

You may find it pays to shop around.

My Turn

Telling Tales Out of School

An NEA member discovers that writing about her students makes for good copy—and good teaching.

By Carol Jago

One of the oddest things about being a teacher is that you find yourself a character in the stories students tell.

The day Christina fainted in my arms has passed into Santa Monica High School folklore.

What happened was that the class was reading aloud a particularly gruesome passage in John Gardner's novel *Grendel*. As the monster begins to tear the queen apart, Christina, pale and wan, walks to the front of the room.

In my ear she whispers, "Mrs. Jago, can I please go to the . . ." At which point, she collapses.

Lifting her head from the carpet, I turn to the class and remark, "Ah, the power of literature."

How this story has been told and retold over the years, I shudder to think. My guess is that the part where I call the nurse and Christina is diagnosed with a bad case of missing breakfast is somehow omitted.

Students tell the story to make a point—Mrs. Jago is obsessed by literature.

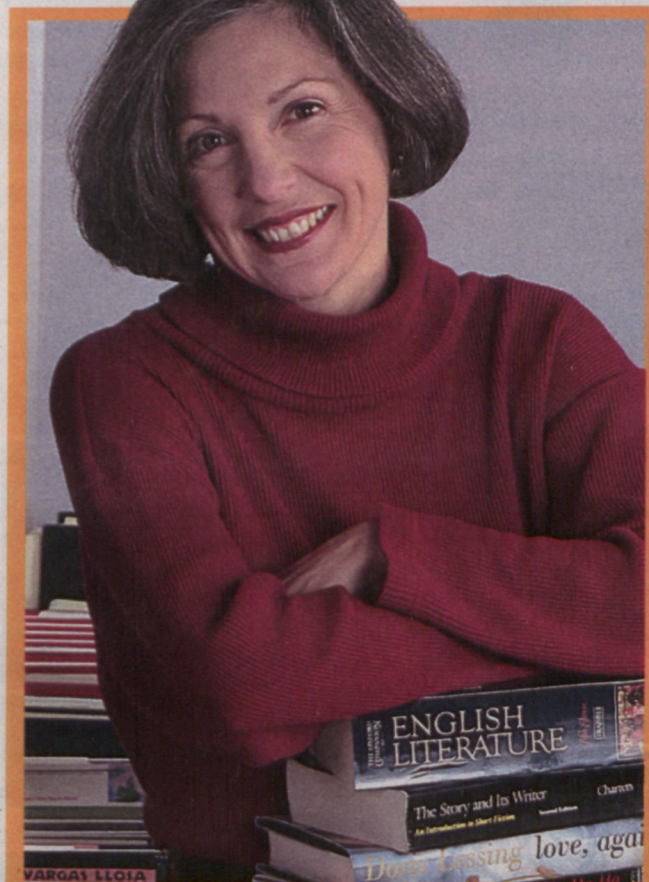
Now students have always turned teachers into characters for the stories they tell about school, but lately I have begun to turn the tables on them.

As an education columnist for a local newspaper, I tell stories about my students.

What I try to do is paint a detailed picture of a classroom moment and then draw the reader in to see what I see in the story about powerful teaching and learning. Invariably, my students have the leading roles.

I'm careful to ask before I publish passages from student essays or lines of their poetry, but no one has ever turned me down. When I quote something that has been said in class, I run it by the speaker first.

On Mondays, I make sure that anyone whose name appeared in the piece gets a copy of the article. More often than not, they and their parents have



Bob Riha, Jr.

Carol Jago has been leaning on the classics for the past 24 years. She's a member of the Santa Monica Malibu Classroom Teachers Association.

already read it in the newspaper.

This on-going public record of our work has created a subtext to the classroom. Students not only experience the day first-hand, but then read what their teacher thought about it.

Parents hear not only my polished back-to-school-night remarks, but also stories about their children. Like devoted soap opera fans, they continue reading to see what happens next.

Keeping such a record has had a profound effect upon me as a teacher. Often it's only when I sit down to write about a lesson that I actually discover the key ingredient that made it flop or soar.

It's often only when I type out a dazzling passage from a student paper that I figure out what the student has done that made it so remarkable.

Despite all the rhetoric about the importance of reflection for good teaching, time to contemplate is rarely scheduled into our teaching day.

Writing about my students has helped me begin to understand my own methods. It has also made me more attentive to those magic moments that make both for good copy and for good teaching.

Lena, an eleventh grader, accosted me at the end of class last week. "Mrs. Jago, somebody said you once dated a poet. Is this true?"

Not having the foggiest notion where this question had come from—let alone where it

was going—I decide to buy time.

"I don't understand what you mean by 'dated,' Lena."

"Oh, you know, went out with."

"No, I don't think so, but I did once kiss Walter Mosley."

Lotus Thompson, just on her way out, stops dead in her tracks. "You kissed Walter Mosley?"

"It was at a convention, and I had just said something nice about *Devil in a Blue Dress*, and, well, there were about a hundred other people in the room."

Lena and Lotus look meaningfully at one another and depart, concocting who knows what story about their teacher who is obsessed with books. I hope it's a good one.

Carol Jago teaches English at Santa Monica High School and directs the California Reading and Literature Project at UCLA. Her work appears regularly in The Outlook and the Los Angeles Times. She can be reached at jago@gseis.ucla.edu.

You Said It

We touched a nerve! Our March cover story about block scheduling sent you and your colleagues to your keyboards, phones, and FAX machines to register your opinions on the block.



Bill Fischer,
editor

Most readers who wrote us were critical of block scheduling, and some thought our coverage was biased in favor of the block. You'll find a sampling of reader comments on page 46 of this issue.

Our block scheduling issue also drew a fair amount of comment from people outside the Association. One businessman called me to get a copy of our story. His daughters were planning to attend a school that was considering a block schedule, and he wanted to know what to expect. Students who go to block schedule schools also weighed in on the topic.

Since we tend to get many more letters from people who are critical of an issue than we get from people who are in favor, it's hard to say how NEA members line up, pro and con, on the block. But, from reading your comments, it's clear that the surest way for block scheduling to fail is for administrators to force the decision on school staff and, worse, to skip training of school staff before going to the block.

We're receiving about the same volume of mail on our April cover story on inclusion. We know there's widespread unhappiness with the way some districts go about moving students with special needs into regular classrooms. We'll try to print many of your thoughts on the inclusion issue in our next issue . . . next September.

Yes, this is our last issue of the current school year. It seems like just a few weeks ago that I was writing to explain our reasons for redesigning *NEA Today*. Now I'd like to ask for your input on the topics you would like to see us cover in next year's issues.

So if you have an idea to share, please let us know. See the box on page 47 for details on how to reach us—and see you in September.

Bill Fischer

Meet

As executive vice president of the AFL-CIO, Linda Chavez-Thompson is the highest ranking woman and minority in the American labor movement.

That's a long way from where she started. Granddaughter of Mexican immigrants, Chavez-Thompson picked cotton at 10 and was forced to drop out of high school at 15 to help support her family. At 23, she became a bilingual secretary for a local AFSCME office in Texas, then worked her way up to AFSCME regional vice president.

Two years ago, she joined John Sweeney and Richard Trumka in a fight for the reins of America's labor coalition, the AFL-CIO. With a pledge to revitalize the American labor movement, they won.

NEA Today assistant editor Stefanie Weiss spoke with Chavez-Thompson in her office at the AFL-CIO, just two blocks from the White House.

You're often described as "militant." Why?

The one thing that always makes me angry, the one thing that always upsets me, is when I see the rights of workers abused, when I see them being mistreated, when I see the bias, the prejudice, the intimidation because somebody holds the power of a job over your head.

I fought those injustices as a union representative. And now I have the opportunity here to be able to work on programs that will help so many more workers build a little respect and dignity for themselves on the job.

What's changed at the AFL-CIO?

A lot. Our style is different—we're joining workers at rallies, sponsoring town meetings, talking to all working people, not just union members. We're putting more resources into political action and organizing, hiring more women and minorities, and reaching out to all groups that care about workers.

And AFL-CIO unions are more united. In the past, we had unions competing for the same group of workers, tearing down one union so they could build the other up, spending millions of dollars. That's not happening anymore. We're starting to see more comradery and less competition.



Why should NEA members care about the changes at the AFL-CIO?

If we build a strong labor movement, if we bring more people into the fold, your union will be stronger, too. And your members' jobs will be easier. A family that earns enough to support itself provides a much better environment for children to grow up in.

In your travels around the country, what do you hear from working people?

We hear people say, "I'm a steelworker. I have a good job. I have a sense of

security—at least for now. But my kids can't get jobs that pay anything. My kids can't move out of the house."

In Denver, I heard a young woman say, "I work two jobs. I have an eight-hour job, and then I clean buildings. I try to see my son—he's two-and-a-half. But I didn't see him take his first step. I didn't hear his first word. I haven't seen him growing up."

How can you help?

The AFL-CIO must give working people the opportunity to stand up and speak for themselves—whether it's joining a union or joining a coalition of groups in their community to put pressure on the politicians to begin to address the issues that concern them.

But we can't change things by working with union members alone. We have to have help from our communities to begin to make a difference.

You say union members

haven't educated their children well. What do you mean by that?

We've lost a couple of generations of children who don't realize what their parents have done to build the workplace in America. Forty hours a week didn't just come automatically. Overtime didn't come automatically. Labor Day is more than just the last holiday before you go back to school.

We've left something out of the education of our young people when they think that the car for graduation just magically appeared because Mom and Dad have good jobs. They don't know how good those jobs are. They don't know what those jobs were before a union, perhaps, made them good jobs.

What can the AFL-CIO do to educate young people?

Last year, we sponsored Union Summer (see photo, inset). We sent almost 1,500 young men and women out to learn about the everyday lives of workers in this country.

We want to show young people that there are two sides to the story. Maybe they'll go back to their schools and ask some questions. "Why isn't there more in this book about what unions have done? Why isn't a labor leader invited to speak at our college? Why don't teachers teach us more about what labor has done for this country?"

What about your education?

There were eight kids in my family, and when I was 15, five of us were in school. With the \$30 a week that my father was earning, it was difficult to make ends meet.

So my father had to make a choice. Because my father was a little old-fashioned—he thought girls didn't need an education, boys were the ones who were going to have to support families—he told me I would have to quit.

I cried for two weeks. I really wanted to go back, but I was never able to finish. Still, I was determined that I would learn. I read everything I could get my hands on. My grandfather taught me how to give a public speech. If I mispronounced one word, ouch—he would hit me on the noggin. That's a hard way to learn.

How will you know you've been successful?

When we see unions accepting more women and people of color into leadership positions, when we begin to make a difference in the everyday lives of people, when we see the laws turn around to help working people, then I'll know.

Linda Chavez-Thompson

Labor's New Face

Joe Di Dio

Debate

Should morals be taught in the classroom?



Yes

A 36-year veteran educator, Purificacion Manuel, Ph.D., teaches first grade at J.T. McWilliams Elementary School in Las Vegas, Nevada. An active NEA member, she recently received an A+ Award from the Clark County Classroom Teachers Association.

On the first day of school, I offer my first graders a lesson in morality. I explain to them that each person has a good and bad side, and that by listening to their good side, they'll be successful in becoming whatever they want to be.

We end the lesson by writing down all the good choices students can make—to be respectful, responsible, capable, considerate, quiet, and to exhibit self-control.

On the second day—and every day thereafter—I spend up to 20 minutes first thing in the morning teaching morals, manners, and right conduct.

I firmly believe that if all students—from kindergarten to high school—were taught morals every morning, discipline problems could be eliminated, student learning would go up, and teachers would be free to do a better job teaching.

You may ask why I'm so motivated to see that children get a moral education in school. I was born and raised in the Philippines, where my parents taught me manners and morals at home and my teachers reinforced the lessons everyday at school.

"Good manners and right conduct" is part of the Philippine curriculum. In fact, it's the first subject listed on students' report cards. Because it's so prominent, students in the Philippines are well-behaved and respectful, and discipline problems are few and far between.

Here in Las Vegas, I teach morals to my students everyday because I want them to be well-behaved and respectful students, too. I want them to have the discipline and self-control they'll need to get a good education and go to college.

And I teach morals because it can—and does—change lives.

Let me give you an example. Last year, a parent came to me to tell me about her son's discipline problems in kindergarten.

"He's hyperactive, can't stop talking, and won't stop messing around," she told me. "I hope you can help him turn things around."

Well, after only one week of daily lessons in manners and morals, all of the boy's problems—with the exception of talking out of turn—were eliminated.

After the second week, I told the boy's grandmother that her grandson was doing well, that he listened attentively, did his work right away, and that when he finished his work, he put his head down.

She was thrilled. "It's a miracle," she said, giving the boy a big kiss and hugging him tight.

Later that year, the boy was selected "Citizen of the Month," became an A student, and got excellent marks in all measures of social growth and behavior.

I could give many more examples, but I believe I've made my point: When students are taught everyday how to behave, respect authority, and lead a moral life—from the first day of school to the last—they will become good students.

Most important, they will have the chance all students should have—to realize their ambitions and to be successful in life.

No

Cindy Rupert handles data collection and reporting for special education students in Indiana, Pennsylvania. She's currently vice president of her local NEA affiliate and editor of a statewide newsletter for education support employees who are NEA members.



The educational setting is and should be expressly for inspiring and nurturing the learning process in children. Parents should—and must—teach morals at home.

School employees routinely model good morals and solid ethics, redirect a student's sense of right and wrong when needed, and take the time to talk to students in crisis.

But school employees should not take class time to teach morals. A few reasons why:

■ *Children's moral fiber must be established before they come to school.* School is a much tougher place than it used to be—what with peer pressure, drugs, weapons, gang rivalries, and the rest.

To combat pressure to conform, students must have a solid moral background in place—a sense of right and wrong, coping skills, thinking skills, and self-esteem.

This background must be instilled before students walk through the schoolhouse door. Parents and caregivers must teach these basics in the formative years of life to inoculate their kids against harm.

■ *School employees should not be expected to become parental surrogates.* As a parent, I feel it's my responsibility to instill proper morals in my child. I wouldn't want her to be taught morals by anyone else. Who else will instill my values, my religion, my morals?

■ *School employees can't substitute for parental role models.* True, many students don't have much of a home-life these days. And it seems that many in our society look to the schools to pick up the slack.

But we can't and shouldn't try to create or mimic the parental environment in the school setting. That's not what education is about.

■ *School employees can't take the place of trained counselors.* Dealing with moral and ethical issues in school can seem like walking a tightrope at times. It's not wise—for legal and professional reasons—to go outside of the educational boundaries, to counsel students, or to get too involved in their lives.

And it's not appropriate for schools to become counseling agencies. That's best left to the community groups and professionals who are properly certified, trained, and available all the time to help the students who need them.

Sure, a lot of kids have been dealt a bad hand, but schools can't compensate for the situations that put so many students at-risk.

■ *Most important, teaching morals in the classroom takes away from our #1 job—teaching academics.*

We need to keep our focus on what education is meant to be—teaching and stimulating children to learn and strive for academic excellence. Our goal must be to create intelligent, productive citizens for our communities.

Whether you're a teacher, school psychologist, bus driver, custodian, secretary, nurse, or cafeteria worker, you touch each student's life in some way every day. In your actions, you model morals. That's as it should be.

The job of teaching morals, however, is best left to the home setting. In my opinion, that's as it should be.

What's Your Opinion?

Should morals be taught in the classroom? To vote "Yes," send an E-mail message to vote-yes@neatoday.nea.org. To vote "No," E-mail vote-no@neatoday.nea.org. Please note your message subject as NEA Today May Debate.

Where you stand on last month's Debate

Is the segregation of ESL students discrimination?

37% Yes

63% No

Marketplace

Technology

The Education Technology Promotion Guide from the Software Publishers Association offers guidelines for publicizing the success of your educational technology program. A CD-ROM includes letter and press release templates in both MAC and PC formats. To learn how your local association can obtain a copy, visit the NEA's Tech page at <http://nea.org/cet>.

Instructional Aids

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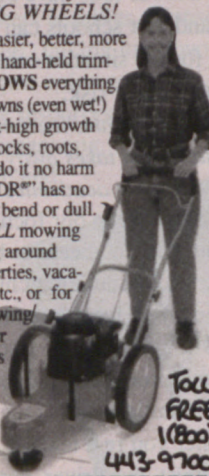
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The Coalition for Quality Children's Media is proud to announce the second edition of **KIDS FIRST!** Directory. Over 700 recommended videotapes and CD-ROMS are included in this edition along with expert guidance from child development and media specialists. This 68 page, four color directory of quality programming for children costs \$5, including shipping and handling. To order your copy, call toll free 888/319-KIDS, Dept. NEA, or send a check or money order to **KIDS FIRST!**, Dept. NEA, PO Box 480255, Kansas City, MO 64148.

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See the information box in the lower right hand corner of this page for details.

Announcements

National Board Certification (NBC), the voluntary, advanced credentialing and professional growth system, will be available in six fields in 1997-98. The 2-part assessment process consists of a portfolio to be completed during the fall and winter, and assessment center exercises administered during summer months in over 250 sites. Beginning in 1997-98, candidates can repeat portions of the assessments to increase their total scores. Applications for the 1997-98 administration of NBC will be available in June by calling 800/532-1813. For information on fee payment or for general information about National Board Certification, call 800/22TEACH.

Free Books! The NEA Professional Library is looking for NEA members to serve on advisory panels for the new *Inspired Classroom Series*. Advisory panel members agree to review the content of manuscripts for accuracy, practicality, and to provide suggestions for revisions. To join an advisory panel (and get three complimentary copies of books you review) write to: Ms. Vernice Woodland, NEA Professional Library, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Room 710, Washington, DC 20036.

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Making the Grade: A Guide to School Drug Prevention Programs. The NEA Health Information Network is pleased to support this compilation of comprehensive health programs and drug prevention programs. This guide will assist you in selecting the most appropriate curricula for your school. For copies of *Making the Grade*, contact Drug Strategies, 2445 M St., NW, Suite 480, Washington, DC 20037; 202/663-6090. Cost: 1-4 copies @ \$12.95 ea., 5 & over @ \$9.95 ea.

As part of an ongoing effort to educate NEA members about adolescent alcohol use, the NEA Health Information Network is promoting a new program called *Ready or Not*, a community program of the Century Council in partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Designed for parents and other adult supervisors of kids ages 10-14, the program takes you through five steps needed to prevent underage drinking problems. A free video kit for use at home or in group workshops is available for FREE from the Century Council, 213/624-9898.

Reminder-the advertising deadline for the September issue is July 11. Have a safe and enjoyable summer.

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Books

Looking for a Great Escape?

Step into the lives of these three teachers—and have a great trip.

What do stories about the Alaskan wilderness in 1904, the slums of Limerick, Ireland, circa 1910, and a Chicago kindergarten class in 1997 have in common?

They're all nonfiction memoirs with educational value that defy any such label—they're thrilling reads.

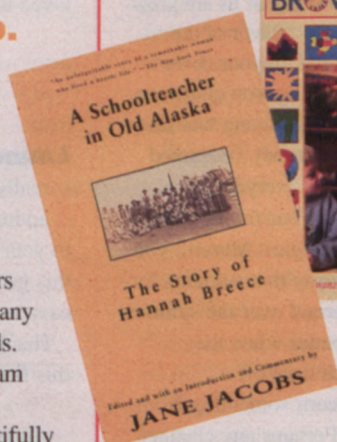
They all have the power to beam you to another time and place.

And they're all written—beautifully—by teachers. Reason enough to put them on your summer reading list.

A Schoolteacher in Old Alaska. Jane Jacobs, editor. *Vintage Books*, 302 pp., \$13.

In 1904, at the age of 45, Hannah Breece begins a daring 15-year adventure, teaching in "old Alaska."

Her journal entries—compiled and explained by her grand-niece—calmly tell a wild tale. Breece nearly drowns in frozen waters—twice. She fights off wild dogs, survives raging storms at

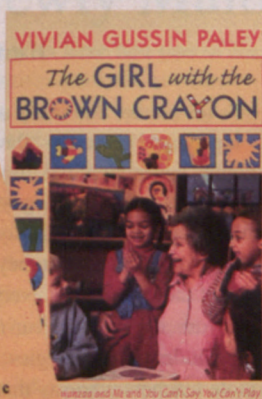


sea, outruns forest fires, combats filth and alcohol, and even teaches 100 students at a time.

If you can place her comments about "primitive" natives in their historic context, this is a terrific contribution to the history of a wild and woolly profession. And a fun time, to boot.

The Girl with the Brown Crayon. Vivian Gussin Paley. *Harvard University Press*, 99 pp. \$18.95.

What happens when kindergartners examine the link between literature and



life? Chicago teacher Vivian Paley provides the engaging details in this book written just prior to her retirement.

Led by the self-revelations of a wise and confident five-year-old girl,

Paley's students read 14 books by children's author Leo Lionni and apply his messages to their lives—and their teacher's. It's a surprising page-turner and a stunning accomplishment.

Angela's Ashes. Frank McCourt. *Scribner*, 364 pp., \$25.

Before he retired, Frank McCourt was an English teacher in New York City's public schools. Although his brilliant, best-selling memoir isn't about teaching, it is about learning. Through turns both funny and heart-wrenching, he tells the story of growing up poor and hungry in Ireland—where irreverence, Shakespeare, and his skill with a pen were ultimately his ticket out.

—Stefanie Weiss, Susan Gilman



Books by NEA Members

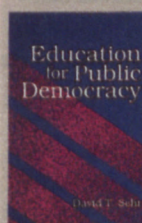
**The Buffalo Jump**

Peter Roop. *Northland Publishing*, 32 pp., \$14.95, 800/346-3257. Written "so that Native

American children could learn about their ancestors," this book tells the story of two brothers who vie for respect during a buffalo hunt.

A Box of Rain

Abigail Lynne Becker. 96 pp., \$7.99, 207/384-2234. The 17-year-old author of this book—daughter of NEA member Linda Becker—was killed in a recent car accident. This collection of her poems honors her memory and showcases her talent.

**Education For Public Democracy**

David Sehr. *State University of New York Press*. 192 pp., \$16.95, 800/666-2211. This theoretical—and practical—book examines how teachers can encourage teens to become "intelligent and effective participants in shaping their society."

NEA Professional Library Top 10 List

1 Flirting or Hurting? A Teacher's Guide on Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment in Schools (Grades 6-12). Nan Stein and Lisa Sjostrom. (\$19.95 non-members / \$15.95 for NEA members) Ways to stop and prevent harassment. (#1864-8-00-FB)



2 Multiple Intelligences. NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. (\$12.95/\$9.95) Find out how your colleagues are adapting their teaching strategies to take advantage of the seven intelligences. (#2910-0-10-FB)

3 Bullyproof: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Fourth and Fifth Grade Students. Nan Stein and Lisa Sjostrom. (\$19.95/\$15.95) "Bullyproof" your classroom with these teacher-tested lessons. (#1873-7-10-FB)

4 Countdown to the First Day of School. Schell & Burden. (\$5.95 / \$4.50) A "must-have" checklist for every beginning elementary teacher. (#2150-9-10-FB)

5 Inspiring Discipline: A Practical Guide for Today's Classrooms. Merrill Harmin. (\$12.95/\$10.95) Teachers say, "We want how-to materials on discipline." This book delivers with strategies you can put to use immediately in your classroom. (#2950-X-10-FB)



6 The First Year Teacher: Teaching with Confidence (K-8). Bosch & Kersey. (\$18.95/\$14.95) The ultimate first-year teacher's handbook that has teachers saying: "I only wish I had had this book sooner." (#1862-1-10-FB)

7 Building Parent Partnerships. NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. (\$12.95/\$9.95) Get this book if you want to explore new ways to involve today's families in their children's learning. (#2911-9-10-FB)

8 Toward Inclusive Classrooms. NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. (\$12.95/\$9.95) Six stories that show how students with special needs can learn with their peers. (#2903-8-10-FB)

9 Integrated Thematic Teaching. NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. (\$12.95/\$9.95) Six stories from teachers who are successfully interweaving disciplines into a tapestry that makes the curriculum come alive. (#2909-7-10-FB)

10 Teaching and the Art of Successful Classroom Management, 2nd Edition. Harvey Kraut. (\$18.95/\$14.95) The book first-year high school teachers have been waiting for. (#2004-9-10-FB)



This month's rankings are based on last month's sales for all books published by the NEA Professional Library, a service for

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Letters



When Inclusion Succeeds

I was pleased to see your coverage of inclusion (Cover story, April). Like the people you featured, I realize that inclusion will never be easy. But several supports in my school district have made it easier—and more successful.

Our union negotiated a letter of understanding that allows for collaboration time between special ed and general ed teachers each week. Notes are taken and distributed to all team members—including parents.

Our district trains inclusion paraprofessionals before they start working, then pays for three hours of additional training time each month.

General education classroom teachers and special ed teachers interview paraprofessionals together.

We model interaction skills for the students. We leave wheelchairs in the younger children's classrooms so they become a natural part of the environment. And so on.

Inclusion isn't easy, because people aren't easy. But our goal—working with people's strengths while accepting weaknesses to make a community—makes the effort worthwhile.

Cris Vowels
Urbana, Illinois
vowelscr@cmi.k12.il.us

Once More Round the Block

Your articles on block scheduling (Cover story, March) gave only the views of those most likely to benefit from it—English and science teachers and consultants. There was no mention of the harmful effects on music programs or the achievement tests done in Canada that show block scheduling can have a harmful effect on student learning.

Are we to believe there are no harmful effects of block scheduling and no disagreement on this issue within our profession? How about some balance?

Brad Jensen
Hudson, Iowa

You neglected to mention that block scheduling reduces contact time with students. I teach five 55-minute periods each day—for a total of 9,900 contact minutes with students each year. With either a 4x4 or A/B block schedule, the number of contact minutes is reduced to 8,100. That's 30 fewer hours of instruction.

In addition, teachers under the block are responsible for six classes instead of five. In this way, block scheduling makes it very convenient to increase coverage of classes without hiring more teachers.

It's fine to consider anecdotal evidence and personal testimony, but sometimes the numbers paint an entirely different picture.

Richard Borst
Aiken, South Carolina
rosto67@worldnet.att.net

Research has found that when the purpose of going to the block is to economize by downsizing the teaching staff—more common than administrators and the NEA publicly acknowledge—the system cannot be academically successful.

In many cases, the switch to block scheduling requires more staff, money, and resources. Your presentation was not only highly biased but inexcusably irresponsible.

Holly Priestley
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
hollyp@vm.temple.edu

The proponents of block scheduling say they're able to teach students more, cover more material, and give more attention to individual students.

This has to involve more teacher energy—not only in classroom delivery and presentation, but in advance preparation time as well.

I'd be very interested to learn how

teachers can stand up to a constant schedule of high-energy output, day in and day out, year after year. Will the block lead to teacher burnout?

John Whitten
Harrington, Maine

It's no wonder that many of us are growing cynical about the "flavor of the month" educational fad. In your cover story on block scheduling, you quote consultant Doug Fleming as saying that students won't forget what they've learned even if they don't meet everyday.

In your story about year-round schooling (Students & Strategies, March), you quote teachers who say that students forgot what they'd learned over the summer months—and did better when they didn't have so much time off.

Perhaps we can learn something from this juxtaposition. Perhaps any change that a school staff is involved in and enthusiastic about will be effective. Perhaps the real answer is that when teachers are energized, learning happens—no matter what the model.

Jane Silverstein
Paterson, New Jersey
jsilvie@worldnet.att.net

'Year-Round Refugees'

And many of my colleagues are year-round school refugees, shell-shocked by an educational system that never stops. Our support personnel are burnt out from ever-increasing case loads.

Your article on year-round schools (Students & Strategies, March) is fictitious garbage about a system that doesn't work.

When are we going to see some hard evidence in stories like these? Where is the empirical research that can point the way to better teaching situations?

Mel Palmer
Porterville, California
mpalmer@telis.org

Computer Dissection

Thanks for the terrific frog dissection Web site (Heads Up, March). My seventh graders can't dissect on specimens this year since we don't have the funds. But this way, they got a double lesson—in computers and biology. They loved it, and so did I.

Maureen Elkins
Stanton, Kentucky
moreen@mis.net

Launched into Cyberspace

I really appreciate all of the E-mail addresses and emphasis on technology in your recent issues. I'm a novice at this game but am finding it quick and easy to hook into cyberspace.

Thanks for your leadership and help in this field. Keep up the great work.

Marjorie Rios
Livingston, Tennessee
margerios@multipro.com

Adding to the ADD Debate

As a parent of a child with attention deficit disorder, I take great exception to Dr. Armstrong's conclusions (Innovators, February).

Based on more than 30 years of rigorous clinical and theoretical research, the medical, educational, legal, psychological, psychiatric, neurological, and pharmaceutical communities have empirically and repeatedly documented the basis for a diagnosis of ADD in certain individuals and the dramatic improvement medical and other interventions have made in their lives.

Dr. Armstrong appears willing to dismiss this impressive body of scholarly work as a conspiracy with parents to enable our "emotionally disturbed" progeny "extra time on medical and legal exams and later, extra Social Security money."

Perhaps Oliver Stone should be notified.

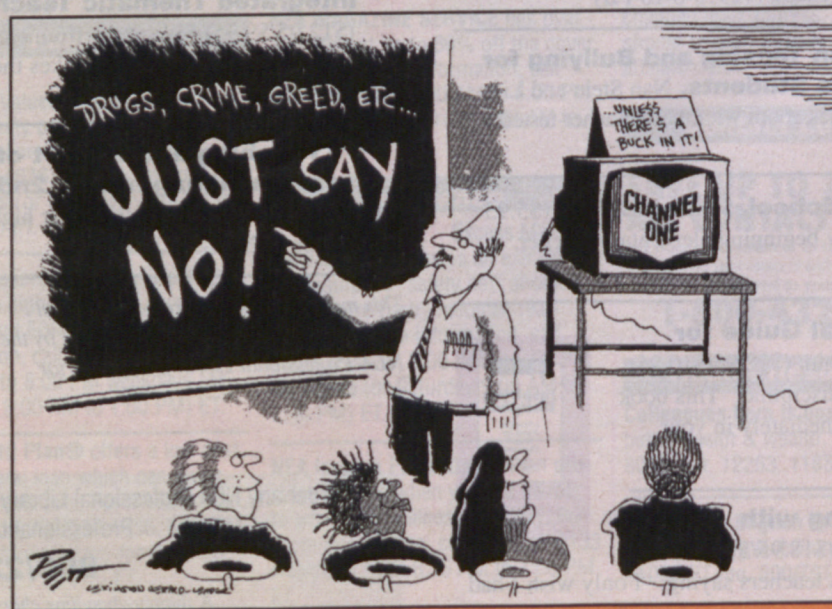
Eileen Button Gomez
Charlottesville, Virginia

If Dr. Armstrong thinks ADD/ADHD is really a myth, I'd love for him to take my son for one week, unmedicated.

As a parent of a bright ADHD boy, I'm sick and tired of people who don't know what it's like giving me advice and telling me that I'm wrong to give my child every advantage I can.

Ilona Watts
Las Vegas, Nevada

Let's be honest. We're not giving Ritalin to children to correct a disorder but to compensate for an unruly, noisy, overstimulated society, unstructured and disorganized families, or just plain defiant behavior caused by lack of discipline.



Joel Pett

A Letter From: Fayetteville, Arkansas

Life Lessons from a Newly Multicultural Community

If, as Pope John Paul II says, a country can be measured by how it treats its immigrants, my students are not measuring up.

I was brought up on stories about a great parade of immigrants who came to build railroads, pick cotton, and work in automobile factories.

Today I listen to my students, and I hear confusion and bigotry.

I teach Spanish at Fayetteville High School in northwestern Arkansas, an area that's got a 2.6 percent unemployment rate and a growing chicken-producing industry.

Businesses here need workers willing to work in jobs my students would never dream of taking. In this area, even McDonalds pays workers who stay for three months a bonus.

As more Mexican immigrants move here to take these jobs, I hear comments that betray my students' ignorance of their economy and its place in the world.

I see kids who have lost one of the most impressive qualities of immigrants—a strong work ethic. My students don't understand what would drive a person to risk family, culture, and language—to risk all that is important in their lives—to get a job.

To teach them, we studied the economic realities that bind the United States and Mexico. Then I split my students into economic groups that mirrored the Mexican society. I gave them Mexican money equivalent to their assigned economic level—money on which to live for three days.

They were required to pay shelter and transportation bills each day. Food was optional.

The least affluent found that they could not eat for all three days and had to make a choice about which day to eat their Tootsie Roll. They were angry. They tried to steal money, and some turned to counterfeiting.

The middle group discovered their

budgets only allowed them the smallest margin of comfort, but, still, they retained the ability to eat Tootsie Roll Pops all three days.

The one wealthy student was able to eat Snickers each day in perfect comfort. He was smug.

On the second day, the peso was devalued, and the students were upset. There was no longer enough money for Tootsie Rolls for the now even angrier, very hungry poor.

Students in the middle group now had to choose which day to eat their Tootsie Pop—their slim zone of comfort evaporated overnight.

There was still one smug person enjoying Snickers without care.

On the third day, students in the poor and middle groups were offered the chance to eat if they would give up all, including possibly their families, to try to find life-supporting work in the United States. They all went.

Even though to teenagers, there is

great power in Tootsie Rolls, the students understood the gravity of the choice they had made.

They experienced what many Mexican immigrants feel—it's hard to make it in the United States, but it's worse in Mexico.

Once they walked in the economy of Mexico and in the shoes of many immigrants, the ties that bind our two countries and the reasons for the changes in our community became clear to them.

Most important, they now see immigrants as real people coming from dire circumstances, who provide an economic plus to northwestern Arkansas.

Kathy Lemons teaches Spanish at Fayetteville High School. The project she describes here won first place for high school economics teaching last year from the National Council for Economic Education.

Can't we change the structure of our classrooms to fit these different thinkers? I sometimes think that if Albert Einstein were alive today, someone would put him on Ritalin.

Julie Davis
Twin Falls, Idaho

Oakland Analysis

The letter from three Oakland teachers on Ebonics (Letter from Oakland, March) is like the morning sunshine after a stormy night.

Theirs is the only sensible, objective, considered account of the Oakland school board's flirtation with Ebonics that I've seen. I commend them for their analysis and conclusions.

I'm glad to see the three teachers haven't given up, that they and their colleagues are fighting for change, for a chance to teach, for the opportunity for all Oakland children to learn.

Frank Totten
Monmouth Junction, New Jersey

Troops to Teachers

I was taken aback by the misinformation and sexist nature of your piece on the Troops to Teachers program (Bottom Line, March). I'm a female soldier enrolled in the program, which provides monetary incentives to school systems that hire program participants.

You imply that the program was created to bring more men into the teaching profession. This is not so. The program aims

to help relieve the teacher shortage, provide positive role models for kids, and assist those affected by military cutbacks.

Those interested in more information can go to <http://voled.doded.mil/dantes/ttt>.

Franca Gilbert
Greenville, Tennessee

A 'Slicker Pension Raid'

When reading your account of Maine's foiled pension raid (Newsmakers, February), it occurred to me that Maine used the wrong approach. Done properly, a slick raid on teacher retirement will evoke little outcry.

A previous Arkansas state chief executive engineered such a raid in 1985. He took \$25 million from the fund and used it to increase teacher salaries. Payback won't begin until the year 2000.

The Arkansas politician who devised this technique and then skedaddled before the payback date rolled around has gone on to bigger and better things.

With substantial NEA help, he's now ensconced in the White House where he devises slick balanced budget schemes, in which all the spending is done during his term and all the balancing is to be done by whoever follows him.

E.L. Gilmore
Bella Vista, Arkansas

Doing Better

NEA Today is getting better and better. Thanks so much for including so many technology issues. I especially

liked "Kids Online Do Better in Class" (Bits & Bytes, February). This research will help support me when I go in front of our school board Monday night to ask for technology money.

Dan King
Onalaska, Wisconsin

Better Bones

Thanks for your wonderful article on osteoporosis (Health, February). As a professional educator of physical education, I, too, find it disturbing that children are receiving less and less physical education in the schools.

A good physical education program promotes the activities needed for bone growth and the attitudes that discourage kids from picking up risky behaviors.

One more thing NEA members can do to prevent osteoporosis? Lobby for more physical education.

Terry Arvidson
Hanau, Germany

Library Rights

I enjoyed reading "Is Your School Library Safe?" (Rights Watch, January). I feel it's important that the courts uphold the constitutional right for libraries to house a variety of books, including controversial ones. I hope your article will encourage people across the country to stand up and fight for their fundamental rights.

Janae Eustice
Cheboygan, Michigan

Boycott TV!

I'm discouraged and disgusted by the way teachers are portrayed in television programs and commercials. Over and over, we're shown as boring, stupid, out-of-touch, insensitive, and cruel.

I'd like to see teachers, as a group, protest these unfair portrayals by hitting television money-makers in the pocketbook. I propose that we cancel our cable access for the summer as a signal that we're not going to take it any more.

We want better programming. We want more family-oriented entertainment. We want some respect!

Maureen Bernas
Olean, New York

Let's Talk

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with NEA Today in one of five ways:

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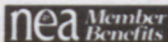
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\$10 OFF A WEEKLY RENTAL IMPORTANT RENTAL INFORMATION

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